

Ghali meets Aziz on oil sales

GENEVA (R) — U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali met Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz on Sunday to discuss possible oil sales by Baghdad, U.N. officials said. A spokesman said the focus of the meeting was to be a U.N. offer allowing the supervised sale by Iraq of \$2 billion worth of oil over six months of buy humanitarian supplies badly needed by ordinary Iraqis. Diplomats said Mr. Aziz was on his way to New York to lobby for the lifting of the tough international economic sanctions imposed on Iraq over its invasion of Kuwait in August 1990. Both U.N. and independent aid agencies say food and medicines are desperately needed wide areas of the country. They say starvation is taking hold in some areas and hospitals have few medical supplies left. Until now, Iraq has firmly rejected any suggestion of partial sales, saying the terms imposed by the world body would be a violation of the country's sovereignty.

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King sends cable to Saudi leader

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein on Sunday sent a cable to King Fahd bin Abdul Aziz of Saudi Arabia, congratulating him on his full recovery from health ailment and wishing him continued good health and happiness. King Hussein said: "It is with great pleasure and satisfaction that I received the good news about your discharge from the hospital after your full recovery from the casual ailment. While praying to the Almighty God for your safety, I sincerely congratulate my dear brother and the Saudi royal family and the Saudi people on your safety."

Barak to visit Cairo — Musa

CAIRO (R) — Israeli Foreign Minister Ehud Barak will visit Egypt within the next few days for talks on ways to boost the Middle East peace process, Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa told reporters on Sunday. Mr. Musa did not give any more information.

21,000 children died in 1995 — Iraq

BAGHDAD (AFP) — More than 21,000 children aged under five died in sanctions-hit Iraq in 1995. Health Minister Umid Mubarak said Sunday, blaming the U.N. embargo in force since 1990. "The unjust embargo imposed on the Iraqi people led to an increase in the number of deaths of children under the age of five, to reach 21,067 in 1995," he told a medical conference. Dr. Mubarak said in 1990 the number of deaths for the same age group was 8,906, and that the number of premature births had risen by 22 per cent this year compared to 1994.

Israeli agents in Cairo to boost security

CAIRO (AFP) — Israel has sent agents from its internal security service Shin Bet to Cairo for the first time to search passengers on El Al flights amid fears of hijack attempts, an Egyptian weekly reported Sunday. The Rose Al Yousef said Israeli security services "fear attempts to hijack Israeli planes by Jewish fanatics to try to secure the release of Yigal Amir," the confessed assassin of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. Eight Shin Bet agents were dispatched to Cairo airport to step up checks on both Arab and Jewish passengers using El Al, Israel's national airline, the government weekly said.

Rights Group wants probe into missing Libyan

CAIRO (AFP) — An Arab human rights group called for the authorities to explain the disappearance of Libyan opposition figure Mansour Kikha who was last seen in the Egyptian capital exactly two years ago on Sunday. Mr. Kikha, a former foreign minister, has been missing since he took part in a Cairo meeting of the Arab Human Rights Organisation. "The fate of Mansour Kikha is still unknown despite the promises made to his wife by Egyptian and Libyan officials," the Egyptian Human Rights Organisation said.

Israel allows in more Palestinians

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel formally authorised on Sunday another 9,500 Palestinian workers to enter its territory, a military spokesman said. The decision was announced on Friday by Prime Minister Shimon Peres after a meeting with Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat at the Erez border crossing between Israel and the Gaza Strip. Of the 9,500 additional workers, 6,800 are residents of the West Bank and another 2,700 come from the Gaza Strip, Lieutenant Peter Lerner said.

Israel speeds up W.Bank pullout

Tulkarm is handed over to Palestinians; first PNA police unit arrives in Hebron

TULKARM (Agencies) — Israeli troops pulled out of Tulkarm on Sunday and the first Palestinian police arrived in Hebron, as the West Bank redeployment picked up speed despite protests and sporadic violence.

Hundreds of Palestinian police took control on Sunday of the northern West Bank town of Tulkarm, bordering Israel, cheered by jubilant residents while their neighbours held angry protests nearby.

A convoy carrying the last Israeli troops pulled out of the town of 50,000 overnight under a hail of stones, empty bottles and insults hurled by Palestinians rejoicing at the end of 28 years of occupation.

When 350 Palestinian police entered the town in a convoy of buses and jeeps from the self-rule enclave of Jericho, they were greeted with sweets handed out by cheering supporters as others fired in the air in celebration. Palestinian officials said they expected to be in control of all main towns except Hebron by Dec. 24, one week ahead of schedule.

"The redeployment process has been speeded up to help finish implementation of the agreement as soon as possible and to build enough trust and confidence between both parties," senior Palestinian negotiator Ahmad Qawieh told Reuters.

Since Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's assassination last month Israel has quickened the pace of troop redeployment, and voter registration for Palestinian elections due on Jan. 20 has picked up.

The withdrawal and elections are major planks in the agreement Mr. Rabin signed with Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat to extend self-rule from Gaza and Jericho to the whole West Bank.

"This is a good sign that the peace process will continue not only on the Palestinian track but also on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks," Mr. Arafat told reporters in Gaza.

He earlier addressed Tulkarm inhabitants by telephone, his voice amplified by megaphones, saying: "We are going to carry on ... until

Jerusalem." Thousands of Palestinians turned out to celebrate in Tulkarm, the second town to be handed over since a peace agreement in Washington in September.

Some raised Palestinian flags on the vacated Israeli military headquarters and hundreds then swarmed into the building to see rooms where some of them had been held as prisoners under the Israeli occupation.

"Tulkarm is now liberated and under the control of the Palestinians," a PLO police officer said as the last of the Israeli jeeps cleared the town.

In Hebron, however, protesting Jewish settlers almost matched the number of Palestinian officials who greeted the first 13 PLO policemen. The police are to set up a district coordination office, a prelude to a partial Israeli pullout from Hebron.

The army is to leave Nabulus, the biggest West Bank town, on Dec. 14, Bethlehem on Dec. 18, and Ramallah on Dec. 24, PLO officials said.

Syria hopes Peres will remove obstacles to peace in U.S. talks

DAMASCUS (Agencies) — Syria expressed hope on Sunday that Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres would present during talks in Washington new proposals that would remove obstacles blocking its peace negotiations with Syria.

"Syria hopes the obstacles which have been blocking the peace process would be removed soon," a Syrian official said.

"It is time for Israel to realise that peace could not move forward if it did not announce its readiness to withdraw fully from every inch of the Golan Heights," the official said.

"Israel should abandon its calls for the establishment of early warning posts in Syrian lands and accept equal and balanced security arrangements," the official added.

Syria has held sporadic peace talks with Israel since 1991 but the negotiations are blocked over the fate of the Golan, future ties and security arrangements.

Both made positive signs for breaking the deadlock after the assassination of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin by a Jewish religious student last month.

Mr. Peres, visiting the United States for the first time since becoming premier, said on Sunday he was considering stating publicly for the first time the price that Israel would be willing to pay for a peace deal with Syria.

Speaking to reporters aboard his Israeli air force flight to the United States, Mr. Peres said he might declare that price — a reference to a future Israeli withdrawal from the Golan — in a statement in the Israeli parliament.

Israel's armed forces chief General Amnon Shahak stressed on Sunday the strategic war-time value of the Golan Heights. "It's undeniable that in case of war the Golan has very high strategic value," the chief-of-staff told schoolchildren in the northern town of Haifa. "No amount of sophisticated equipment, no electronic system can replace it."

Mr. Peres' visit to the U.S. would be followed by a shuttle mission to Syria and Israel by U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher in mid-December.

The Syrian official said Damascus was still calling for "full peace in return for full withdrawal" and that peace remained Syria's strategic option.

"This means that the ball is still in Israel's court. Syria did all that is required from her to push the talks forward and it is now Israel's turn to speak about full withdrawal," the official said.

U.S. satellite sales to Arabs
The Israeli Haaretz newspaper said meanwhile Mr.

Peres will ask U.S. President Bill Clinton to limit sales of observation satellites to Arab states which could use them to spy on Israel.

Mr. Peres will also try to obtain limits on the sales of U.S. satellite photos to nations in the Middle East, the daily said.

The Israeli leader will raise the issue in meetings Monday with both Mr. Clinton and John Deutch, director of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), it said.

Haaretz said senior Israeli officials have been negotiating with Washington over U.S. plans to provide spy satellites to Saudi Arabia and possibly the Gulf emirates.

The Israelis are seeking limits on technology transfer to prevent the Saudis from being able to control the satellite's movement from the ground or to use computer enhancement techniques to improve the quality of transmitted pictures, Haaretz said.

They also want clear U.S. guarantees that Saudi Arabia will not photograph Israeli territory, it said.

Mr. Peres has said he is not going to Washington armed with a weapons shopping list for Israel and had no plans to seek an increase in the \$1.8 billion U.S. military aid programme to his country.

But Israel is trying to gain U.S. authorisation for the export of eight Kfir fighter-bombers to Ecuador in a contract worth \$50 million.

No word on captive French pilots

SARAJEVO (R) — France's Sunday evening deadline for two downed pilots to be released by the Bosnian Serbs drew near without word of their fate or what Paris intends to do in retaliation.

Russia urged Serb leaders to say what had happened to the French airmen and the pilots' families called on Paris to postpone this week's planned signing of the Dayton peace deal.

As the deadline approached, there was no word on the whereabouts of the two pilots shot down during NATO air strikes against the Bosnian Serbs in August, or even whether they were still alive.

France has threatened "multiple consequences" and possible "strikes" against the pilots' captors and their political leaders if the deadline is not met, but has not spelt out

what these might be. Russia, a traditional ally of the Serbs, said Serb leaders had good reasons to reveal the fate of the pilots and called for their release if they were still alive.

"I think the Serb leaders have sufficient reasons to communicate the fate of the pilots," Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev was quoted as saying in London by ITAR-TASS news agency.

"If they are alive, then I would strongly recommend urgently returning them to the French."

Mr. Kozyrev was also quoted as calling for the suspension of moves by the Hague international tribunal to put Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic and army commander General Ratko Mladic on trial for war crimes.

Two airmen urged the French government to put off Thursday's planned signing of the Bosnia peace deal agreed last month in Dayton, Ohio, if the pilots were not returned.

Although the stand-off cast a shadow over the peace deal, preparations for deploying a 60,000-strong NATO force to implement the Dayton accord were gathering pace.

A first group of soldiers and policemen who will protect the headquarters of the force left for Sarajevo on Sunday.

The 46-member advance team included Italian carabinieri para-military police, some 20 U.S. marines and U.S. Army and Air Force security police. They left on a military C-130 transport plane.

King Hussein presents State Awards

By Lola Keilani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — His Majesty King Hussein on Sunday presented the 1995 State Awards for distinguished Jordanian intellectuals, writers and artists whose work contributed substantially to progress in the field of social science, literature, abstract art and theatre production.

At the presentation ceremony, held at the Royal Cultural Centre, Minister of Culture Samir Habashneh paid tribute to King Hussein's leadership and continuous support of Jordan's cultural renaissance, which, he said, will lead to development and better quality of life.

"Jordan's democracy guarantees the political, civil and human rights of its citizen," Mr. Habashneh said.

He stressed that the "special national fabric of the

(Continued on page 7)



His Majesty King Hussein, Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, Upper House of Parliament Speaker Ahmad Lawzi, Royal Court Chief Marwan Al Qasem and Culture Minister Samir Habashneh attend a ceremony on Sunday where the King presented this year's State Awards (photo by Yousef Allani)

Sharif Zeid: Government concern is to safeguard 'responsible' press

Aim of tightening press law is to deter attacks against Jordan's image and values at home, premier tells editors

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker yesterday rejected accusations that his government was intent on lowering the ceiling of press freedom in the country, stressing that "responsible" journalists had nothing to fear from amendments to the Press and Publications Law that are under discussion now.

In a meeting he held with editors-in-chief of daily newspapers at his office, the prime minister said the objective of the expected amendments was to deter newspapers, mainly weekly tabloids,

which do harm to both Jordan's image abroad and to Jordanian values at home.

The mainstream press need not worry about new restrictions being imposed on their freedom to report and comment on various issues, he said. What have to stop are excesses (in the tabloids) which the state, and its people, can neither afford nor tolerate.

The prime minister reminded the editors of earlier statements he made regarding the press, specifically of the pledge to introduce any amendments only through the constitutional process, starting with drawing up proposals by the Ministry of



Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker Information in consultation with legal experts, then approving the draft proposals

by the Cabinet before submitting the whole legislative package to Parliament for consideration and passage.

This is the due process of the law, the prime minister stressed, which could ensure both fairness and democratic practice. He added: "The government is not out to muzzle journalists; on the contrary, it fully understands, even appreciates, critical articles that are written in good faith and for the benefit of the state."

Sharif Zeid complained that attacks in the press generally against the government (for initiating the

(Continued on page 7)

Juppe meets unions today

PARIS (Agencies) — French Prime Minister Alain Juppe said Sunday he would meet with labour union leaders Monday in a bid to defuse a crippling 17-day strike.

Mr. Juppe, in a major concession, said railwaymen of the state railway company SNCF and the Paris metro would continue to be able to retire at the age of 50. He would also suspend a committee appointed to look into the question of pensions which the unions opposed.

The French premier also said an equally controversial plan to restructure the huge debt of the SNCF would not be signed for at least a week.

"More than a week is necessary" to sign the plan, Mr. Juppe said.

Government-appointed mediator Jean Matteoli had told union leaders Saturday the restructuring plan would not be signed Dec. 13 as planned but would be postponed eight days.

Mr. Juppe said he would use parliamentary procedure to cut short a socialist opposition filibuster on a bill empowering his conservative government to impose disputed welfare reforms by decree.

He said he was to go to parliament on Sunday night and invoke article 49.3 of the constitution turning the bill into a confidence issue. Unless a no-confidence motion passes within 24 hours, the bill is automatically passed.

In another conciliatory gesture, Mr. Juppe said he was suspending a special commission on public sector pensions with which the unions had refused to cooperate.

Security reason behind expulsion of Iranian diplomat, Kabariti says

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

SECURITY REASON was behind Jordan's decision to expel an Iranian diplomat and the Kingdom does not think that its relations with Iran would be damaged by the expulsion, which was countered by Tehran by ordering out a Jordanian diplomat, Foreign Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti said Sunday.

Mr. Kabariti, who is on a visit to Doha, Qatar, was also quoted as saying that Jordan is considering hosting a meeting of Iraqi opposition to debate the future of Iraq, but the Kingdom is committed to safeguarding the unity of its eastern neighbour.

Mr. Kabariti was quoted as saying by Agence France Presse (AFP) that Jordan was

not recommending a federal Iraq but said "federalism is one solution among others" for the future of the country.

Jordan has "two goals: to end the suffering of the Iraqi people and preserve the country's unity," he told AFP.

He said there could be "a meeting in Amman of representatives of the Iraqi opposition factions from abroad and from within (the country) which would try to reach an agreement on these two goals and find a way of allowing the Iraqi people to decide on the constitutional future of Iraq."

"We have no ready solution in Jordan," Mr. Kabariti added, stressing there was "no Jordanian plot to divide Iraq."

Mr. Kabariti was received by Qatar's Emir, Sheikh Hamad Ben Khalifa Al Tha-

King receives Iranian message

HIS MAJESTY King Hussein on Sunday received a message from Iranian President Hashemi Rafsanjani dealing with "bilateral relations and means of enhancing them for the benefit of the people in both countries."

The Jordan News Agency, Petra, said. The message was delivered to King Hussein by Iranian ambassador to Jordan Ahmad Dastmalchian during an audience at the Royal Court. The audience was attended by Royal Court Chief Marwan Al Qasem.

Mr. Kabariti conveyed to Sheikh Hamad the greetings

(Continued on page 2)

Shbeilat detained for 2 weeks; charges are not yet finalised

By Sa'eda Kilani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The outspoken president of the Jordan Engineers Association (JEA), Leith Shbeilat, who was arrested Saturday on charges of slandering His Majesty King Hussein, was ordered held for 15 days without bail. Attorney General Mahmoud Obeidat said Sunday.

"Until now we haven't received a request for bail," Major Obeidat said. "Investigations will continue in the case."

Maj. Obeidat told the Jordan Times that Mr. Shbeilat had not been questioned on Sunday and charges against him had not been finalised. Mr. Shbeilat, an independent Islamist, surrendered to the authorities on Saturday after being accused of slandering the King. The charges, which are be-

lieved to be based on lectures Mr. Shbeilat gave in the last two months, are considered as an offense and not a crime, his lawyer, Jawad Younis asserted. They carry a maximum sentence of three years.

Mr. Younis said he was ordered off the case because he refused to hand in a letter of attorney before he meets with Mr. Shbeilat alone. Maj. Obeidat said that the lawyer was not aware of the law.

"How can I let him talk to Mr. Shbeilat while he refuses to give me the letter of attorney?" Maj. Obeidat asked. "I have suspended the investigation until Shbeilat appoints another lawyer. But Mr. Shbeilat insisted on Mr. Younis' presence."

Maj. Obeidat said that Mr. Younis was not ordered off the case and that he was called Monday to represent Mr. Shbeilat.

Ten professional associations meanwhile announced they had decided to form a committee to defend Mr. Shbeilat. It consists of three lawyers: Zuhair Abul Ragheb, Tayseer Hawamdeh and Musa Hamdan. The associations also decided to send a telegramme to the King requesting an audience.

The JEA council called for forming committees to attend Mr. Shbeilat's trial and follow up the case.

JEA Vice President Azzam Huneidi told the Jordan Times that the JEA council was also exerting efforts to meet with the concerned officials to discuss the issue. He said the "associations issue" should be solved through dialogue and called on the government to be more open towards what he called the other opinion.

(Continued on page 7)

German probe against Iranian minister is on

KARLSRUHE (AFP) — German federal prosecutors have launched a murder probe against the head of Iranian intelligence, a spokesman said here Sunday, the first time a Western country has directly challenged such a senior Iranian official over terrorism.

Prosecution spokesman Rolf Hannich said the investigation concerned Iranian Security Minister Ali Fallahian's alleged role in the September 1992 murder of four Iranian Kurdish opposition militants.

Mr. Fallahian is suspected of having ordered the killings at a Berlin restaurant named Mykonos. One of those killed was Iranian Kurdish opposition leader Sadegh Sharafkandi.

Mr. Hannich told AFP the investigation had been opened "in the past few days" but he refused to be more specific.

A trial of five men — four Lebanese and an Iranian — began in October 1993 in Berlin in connection with the restaurant killings and is still going on. The case drawn up by federal prosecutors specifically names Iranian intelligence.

Mr. Hannich's statement confirmed a report in Monday's edition of the German news magazine Focus, made public Saturday, which revealed federal prosecutors were opening the inquiry.

It is the federal prosecutor's office in Karlsruhe, southwest Germany, which is

responsible for investigations into alleged terrorism.

Germany, which says it has a policy of "critical dialogue" with Tehran, is Iran's biggest trading partner, and has welcomed Mr. Fallahian and Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati in the past two years.

In 1993, Mr. Fallahian was received in Germany by Bernd Schmidbauer, secretary of state and head of the German intelligence services, at a meeting condemned by the United States, Israel and particularly Britain.

Britain is campaigning for Iran to abandon its religious "decree condemning British writer Salman Rushdie to death for alleged blasphemy in his novel The Satanic Verses."

However, the lower house of the German parliament forced the government last month to postpone a two-day conference on Islam, organised by Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel, because Mr. Velayati was due to take part.

Deputies said their decision was justified by Iranian President Hashemi Rafsanjani's comments that the assassination of Israeli Premier Yitzhak Rabin was the "vengeance of God."

Tehran had not reacted earlier to the decision to postpone the conference for fear of alienating Bonn, its major ally in Europe. Mr. Kinkel later defended his Iranian policy as justified.

Islah minister got food for supporters — GPS

SANAA (Agencies) — Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh's ruling party on Sunday accused a resigning Islamic fundamentalist minister of having used his position to supply food to his party's supporters.

A General People's Congress (GPC) official said Supply and Trade Minister Mohammad Al Afandi and his deputy Abdul Majid Al Mekhlafi, both from the fundamentalist Al Islah party, had formed an unofficial and partisan body to "distribute food rations."

The issue would be taken up in cabinet meetings, he told the official SABA news agency.

The two handed in their notice on Saturday saying they had been "stripped of their prerogatives and are no longer in a position to fulfil their responsibilities" in the ministry, a member of Al Islah said.

He did not say whether their resignations had been accepted.

A public row broke out in August between the GPC and Al Islah over the running of the Supply and Trade Ministry.

The GPC accused Mr. Afandi of using his post to profit his party, and employing Al Islah militants instead of government workers to distribute rations of wheat and flour to the public.

Al Islah Secretary General Mohammad Yadhumi said Saturday the minister used party militants "to ease the plight of the population and send flour and wheat rations to all parts of the country."

In their letters, Mr. Afandi and his deputy said they were no longer in a position to "supervise the distribution of

basic foodstuffs in line with ministry rules."

They also accused unnamed "parties and influential people" of "interference hindering the running of the ministry."

Sources close to Al Islah said the party's leaders and their GPC counterparts were in contact to try to "avoid a crisis between the two members of the coalition."

Relations between Al Islah, which has nine cabinet posts, and the GPC, which heads 15 ministries, have worsened in the last few months. The two have clashed over economic reforms begun under the auspices of the World Bank.

Yemen, a small oil-producer and one of the most impoverished Arab countries, spends about \$400 million annually to subsidise such items as wheat and flour.

Mr. Yadhumi said the appointment of Mr. Afandi earlier this year was aimed at easing pressure on the people by ensuring that subsidised food items reach the most needy.

"The coalition agreed on a joint strategy, but regrettably this was never carried out, prompting the resignation of Afandi and his deputy."

Residents said a 50-kilogramme sack of wheat fetched up to 700 rials (\$14) on the black market, more than double its official subsidised price of 315 rials (\$6.30).

Last month the cabinet failed to hold a routine weekly meeting when Islah members boycotted it in protest against a report in an Egyptian newspaper that charged the party with supporting Muslim zealots.

FIS says GIA killed founder

CAIRO (AFP) — Algeria's Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) accused the hardline Armed Islamic Group (GIA) of the murder in July of one of its founding sheikhs in Paris, the Arab daily Al Hayat reported on Saturday.

"We consider the GIA responsible for the assassination of Imam Abdul Baki Shahrawi," Abdallah Anas, a member of the FIS executive committee, said.

Mr. Anas pointed out that Shahrawi's murder "followed the publication of a statement" by the GIA permitting the killing of FIS figures.

The FIS does not "know precisely who carried out the killing," Mr. Anas admitted, but underlined that "the responsibility falls automatically on the GIA."

The two groups have led militant violence against the government in Algeria, but Mr. Anas said the FIS opposed "transferring the struggle abroad," referring to bombing attacks in France claimed by the GIA.

The GIA is the most hard-line of the Muslim groups fighting to bring down the military-backed government in Algiers.

Mr. Anas said the conflict between Islamists and the Algerian government had reached a stalemate, saying: "The regime cannot liquidate the armed groups but they also are unable to solve the situation with the regime militarily."

"It is a matter of bartering. Neither side can eliminate the other by force."

But he said President Liamine Zeroul's election win last month did not mean fundamentalists had lost popularity.

"The people chose Zeroul, who they consider the key to the solution of the crisis because he holds the media and the financial and military means (to do so) and because he perhaps has best positions to negotiate with the FIS."

But "to win a battle does not mean winning the war," Mr. Anas said of Mr. Zeroul.

FIS leaders recognised Mr. Zeroul after the election and offered to open a dialogue with him to end the four-year conflict in Algeria, although FIS dissenters condemned the offer as treason.

The FIS said in November that clashes broke out between its partisans and the GIA in eastern Algeria.

Three-man Libyan team escapes death in Somalia

MOGADISHU (AFP) — A three-man Libyan delegation narrowly escaped death when they were ambushed while driving to an airport in the south of Mogadishu on Saturday, a militia source said here.

The source said the Libyans had just left Mogadishu for Ballidigole airport under escort of two so-called technicals, or pickup trucks mounted with guns, of General Mohammad Farah Aidede's faction when they were attacked by rival militiamen of self-styled interim Somali President Ali Mahdi Mohammad's faction.

A fierce shootout ensued, which ended with one of the escorting technicals being disabled, before other technicals belonging to Gen. Aidede rushed in reinforcements to rescue the Libyans, who were then forced to cancel their journey and returned to Mogadishu.

At least two militiamen died and two others were wounded in the ambush, which appeared to have been planned well in advance. The source did not say if the Libyans were injured.

Nor did the source say if the Libyans were diplomats recently appointed by Tripoli to open a diplomatic mission in Mogadishu or whether they were other Libyans on an official visit to the war-torn Somali capital.

Analysts here said the attackers came from the Medina district of the capital, which is controlled by Muse Sudi Yalshaw, of the loyalists of Mr. Ali Mahdi, an arch-rival of General Aidede. Mr. Mahdi warned last October that Libyans should not set foot in Somalia and threatened that they would be shot on sight by his militia-men.

On Oct. 18, a spokesman for former Gen. Aidede financier-turned bitter political rival Osman Hassan Ali Ato, who now leads a rival faction, accused Libya of providing large quantities of money and weapons to Gen. Aidede's faction.

The spokesman claimed that a four-man Libyan delegation which was in Somalia at the time had handed over \$2.5 million and military equipment to Gen. Aidede in the southwestern town of Baidoa on Oct. 17, saying that the latest aid was the second package Gen. Aidede had received from Libya since Sept. 25.

On Oct. 25, Mr. Ali Mahdi himself accused Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi of violating international law by rearming Gen. Aidede and urged the international community to intervene and stop "the gross violation of Somalia's internal affairs by Libya."

Big arms cache found in deserted Kuwait farm

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwaiti police found a big stash of weapons including shells, grenades and mines hidden in a deserted farm near the Saudi border, newspapers said on Sunday.

The weapons discovered in the Al Wafra area were "carefully hidden under sand and concealed in a way to preserve them against erosion," Al Qabas and Al Anba newspapers quoted an Interior Ministry statement as saying.

The arms were among those "left behind by Iraqi forces who occupied Kuwait for seven months in 1990-91 but it was not known who had hid them at the farm or for what purpose, the statement said. It did not say when the arms were found.

The farm, about 100 kilometres south of Kuwait City, had been put up for sale by its owner, named by the statement as Fouad Al Rifai. The ministry did not say whether Mr. Rifai was involved in its investigation of the find.

Iraqi forces abandoned large amounts of arms, mines

and ammunition when they were ousted from Kuwait by a U.S.-led coalition in February 1991.

Police have made numerous arms seizures since the war from caches scattered around the city or on isolated farms.

Many Kuwaitis acquired light weapons during the Iraqi occupation for personal protection. Many are believed to have held on to them illegally after the liberation despite repeated amnesties and calls for disarmament.

In 1993 three men including an officer in the security forces were found in possession of a container load of arms including mortars and machineguns. They told police they were planning to send them to Bosnian Muslims.

They were cleared of charges of illegally possessing weapons under an article of the penal code applied to people who show no harmful intent in committing offences normally punishable by imprisonment.

Europarlament set to endorse Turkey deal

BRUSSELS (R) — The European Parliament is ready to approve a lucrative customs union with Turkey on Wednesday, giving the country one of the closest economic relationships with the 15-nation bloc.

"The customs union will bring Turkey into the most intimate relationship with the European Union (EU) of any member country," the EU's representative in Turkey, Michael Lake, said last week.

Parliamentarians, who for months had threatened to veto the deal because of concern over human rights, will warn Ankara they will be watching its performance closely and that more reforms are needed.

Many Euro parliamentarians, uneasy over Turkey's

treatment of its Kurdish minority and allegations of torture, limits on freedom of speech and the imprisonment of four Kurdish parliamentarians, had threatened to postpone the arrangement.

They are expected to spell out as they vote that the deal can be reviewed if there is no new progress or even a step back on the issue of human rights.

Mr. Lake, who as the EU commission representative in Turkey will be largely responsible for watching the situation, said last week Turkey could not make a success of the customs union if it continued certain practices in the south east, where the army is locked in an 11-year war with Kurds fighting for autonomy.

Turkish Prime Minister Tansu Ciller issued a final appeal for approval on Saturday.

Facing a tough election campaign at home, Ms. Ciller told a foreign correspondence briefing that Turkey had earned its place in an integrated Europe after recent democratic reforms and a promise of more to come.

A no vote, she said, would undermine that commitment and play into the hands of those forces opposing closer cooperation with Europe — an implicit shot at the Islamist Welfare Party that has been tipped as a frontrunner in the Dec. 24 polls.

"We share a cautious optimism. But you know and I know that there are forces

Sudan to deport Ethiopians

KHARTOUM (AFP) — Sudan plans to deport immediately a number of Ethiopians presently in detention for political and security reasons, it was reported Sunday.

Minister for State and Commissioner for Refugees Hassan Al Ghabshawi quoted by the daily Al Ingaz Al Watani as saying that several Ethiopian refugees, whose number she did not give, "have been arrested for committing political and security acts that jeopardise the security of Sudan and contradict their status as refugees."

"Those Ethiopians will be immediately expelled back home," she said.

This is the first official reference to Ethiopians being detained in Sudan. However, it was earlier announced that Ethiopians and Eritreans had been arrested during student demonstrations September in Khartoum.

An Ethiopian was at that time shown on the state-run television confessing that he had taken part in the demonstrations.

Ms. Ghabshawi said Sudan was planning to announce a new policy on refugees.

"The government present pursues an open-door policy while at the same time enforcing voluntary repatriation of refugees," she said.

Ms. Ghabshawi said it had been agreed at a workshop recently held at Sgawak, in eastern Sudan, that a refugee who agreed to go home should be offered assistance for more than two months after arriving home.

This measure was agreed upon because it was discovered that a large number of refugees who were voluntarily repatriated had since returned to Sudan seeking assistance.

The refugees commissioner said there was disagreement with the U.N. on the number of refugees in Sudan. "The UNHCR claims that the number of refugees in Sudan is less than the government's estimated figure of more than a million," Ms. Ghabshawi said, urging the U.N. to do a count.

According to earlier official figures, there are about 600,000 Eritreans, about 30,000 Ethiopians, about 45,000 Chadians and about 40,000 Ugandans in addition to Somalis and Zairean refugees in Sudan.

Sudan has complained that financial aid from the U.N. has now declined to \$7 million a year compared to \$100 million in the past.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Libya denies Shaqqi met with Iranian envoy

TRIPOLI (AFP) — Libya on Sunday denied that a senior Iranian envoy had visited the country to discuss with the head of the Palestinian group Islamic Jihad a plan to assassinate Yasser Arafat. A foreign Ministry spokesman told the official agency JANA that reports of a "visit to Libya by Deputy Foreign Minister for Arab Affairs Hussein Shekholeslam were baseless." He said Mr. Shekholeslam had not visited the country for several years. The denial came after the British daily The Independent said Thursday that Mr. Shekholeslam had held talks in Tripoli with Shaqqi in December to discuss killing Mr. Arafat. On his way back to Damascus via Malta, Shaqqi was gunned down in an attack blamed by Islamic Jihad on Israeli Mossad secret services agents. The Independent, quoting a "source with access to Iranian intelligence," said the Iranians believed the PLO gave Mossad details of Shaqqi's itinerary and false passport enabling them to arrange his assassination in the Maltese city of Sliema on Oct. 26.

Airliner evacuated in Tehran after scare

NICOSIA (R) — An Emirates airliner made an emergency landing in Tehran early on Sunday following a bomb scare and has been evacuated and searched, the official Iranian news agency IRNA said. "The Airbus 300 carrying 180 passengers and crew, made the request to land after receiving threats that a bomb had been planted in the aircraft," IRNA said. "Security forces have searched the passenger plane... nothing suspicious was found," the agency quoted a civil aviation organisation source as saying. It added that a second search was being carried out on the plane, and that all passengers and crew were "safe and sound." The plane, flying from Dubai to Zurich, landed at Tehran's Mehrabad airport at 10:40 a.m. (0710 GMT), it said.

Man with 11 wives eager to marry more

ABU DHABI (AFP) — After 11 marriages, six divorces and numerous children Mohammed Murad of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) said Saturday he was eager to take more wives. "I am ready to marry more and more. I may do it as there are problems between my wives," the 47-year-old told Al Khaleej newspaper. Mr. Murad's four wives, the maximum number allowed under Islam at the same time, live in the same house while one wife had died and he has divorced six others. Although he earns around \$4,800 a month from his job with the Defence Ministry, he has had to start his own business to support his extended family. Apart from his large costs, he gives an additional 500 dirhams (\$136) every month to each wife and double that sum for each divorcee. Mr. Murad has married women from the UAE, Oman, India, and Pakistan. Without revealing how many children he has, Mr. Murad said his eldest was 22 years old, the youngest is three months while another is on its way. "Sometimes I do not recognise all my children," he told the newspaper. "I remember this happened when I when I went shopping with some of them. After I paid the cashier, a little girl grabbed my hand and asked me to buy her something. 'When I told her to ask her father to do so, she said: 'but you are my father.'"

Security reason behind expulsion

(Continued from page 1)

and best wishes of His Majesty King Hussein.

Sheikh Hamad asked Mr. Kabarti to convey his best wishes to King Hussein.

Mr. Kabarti reviewed with Sheikh Hamad the outcome of contacts between the two countries to boost cooperation and coordination in the various fields.

The meeting was attended by Qatari Foreign Minister Sheikh Hamad Ben Jasim Al Thani. Chief of the Emir Court Abdullah Ben Khalifa, Qatari Ambassador to Jordan Naser Abdul Aziz Al Nasr and Jordanian Ambassador in Doha Trad Mithqal Al Fayez.

On the expulsion order served to Saad Batni, a third secretary at the embassy of Iran in Amman on Saturday, Mr. Kabarti told Reuters: "We believe there were security considerations that outweighed any other consideration, and based on that we took the move."

According to sources in Amman, the expulsion was ordered after Mr. Batni was accused of plotting an attack on Israeli tourists visiting Petra during a visit he paid to the southern tourist attraction a week ago.

Jordan also accused Mr. Batni of inciting a resident from the southern town of Maan to attack Israelis visiting Petra.

The Iranian diplomat also "concealed his frequent movements" in southern Jordan, according to officials.

An Iranian embassy spokesman, quoted by Reuters, confirmed the receipt of the expulsion order but denied the charge against Mr. Batni.

"We received a letter from the Jordanian Foreign Ministry asking Mr. Saad Batni to leave on the pretext that he was engaged in activities incompatible with his diplomatic status," the unidentified spokesman told Reuters. "We deny the activities it is reported he was engaged in 100 per cent."

Hours after the expulsion order was served on Saturday, the Iranian government ordered Jordanian Ahmad Al Sabbagh, an administrative clerk at the Kingdom's embassy in Tehran, to leave the country. On the same day, the Jordanian government also received Tehran's approval of the nomination of Sheikh Nuh Salman Al Qudah as the Kingdom's ambassador to Iran.

According to diplomats, the nomination was filed three months ago, and Tehran had taken no action on it until this week.

Mr. Kabarti told Reuters in Doha that he did not think the expulsions "will affect our relations" with Iran. "The Jordanian desire in having close ties with our brethren in Iran is without doubt, and we hope this is clear."

"But we hope these ties are conducted through respecting each other's sovereignty and the principle of non-interference in each other's affairs."

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

18:00 Shelly Duvall's Bedtime Stories
18:30 Richie Rick
19:00 The Animals of the Mediterranean
19:15 Hey Dad
19:40 Doc - Discover Magazine
19:50 The Adventures of the Black Stallion
19:55 Sky Trackers
20:00 Children's programme - Praxiale
20:05 Scie - Madame Le Proviseur
20:10 News in French
20:15 Magazine - Nimbus
20:30 Mc Hale's Navy
20:40 Inventions
20:45 The Bold and the Beautiful
21:10 Star Trek
21:30 News in English
22:25 Anna
23:15 The American Chart Show
23:59 New York Undercover

PRAYER TIMES

04:58 Sunrise
06:23 Sunrise
11:28 Dhuhr
14:13 Asr
16:37 Maghrib
17:54 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church

Sweilieh, Tel. 810740

Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632785

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440

De la Salle Church Tel. 661757

Terrassanta Church Tel. 623346

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541

Anglican Church Tel. 652826

Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331

Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261

St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751

Armenian International Church Tel. 652526

"Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 624358

German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 845457

The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932

Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691

The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811294

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

A depression accompanied by a cold air mass will affect the Kingdom, so temperatures will drop significantly with rain expected at intervals, and winds becoming westerly moderate to active. In Agaba, skies will be cloudy to partly cloudy with a chance of showers, winds southerly moderate, and seas rough.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Min./Max. temp.

Amman 2/8

Aqaba 8/16

Descria 2/10

Jordan Valley 7/14

Yesterday's high temperatures:

Amman 13, Aqaba 20 Humidity

readings: Amman 65 per cent,

Aqaba 41 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:

Dr. Ghaleb Zawaidi 736111

Dr. Fakher Bolbeci 663412

Dr. Khalil Al Tustiq 757253

Dr. Osama Al Hussein 847289

Firas pharmacy 661912

Ferdows pharmacy 778336

Al Asema pharmacy 637055

Nairoukh pharmacy 626762

Al Salam pharmacy 626730

Yacoub pharmacy 644945

Shamoun pharmacy 637660

Nairoukh pharmacy 626762

Najib pharmacy 847632

ZARQA:

Dr. Amin Abul Rub 962393

Khalifah pharmacy 965417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111

Civil Defence Department 661111

Civil Defence Immediate 630341

Rescue 637777

Fire Brigade 671901

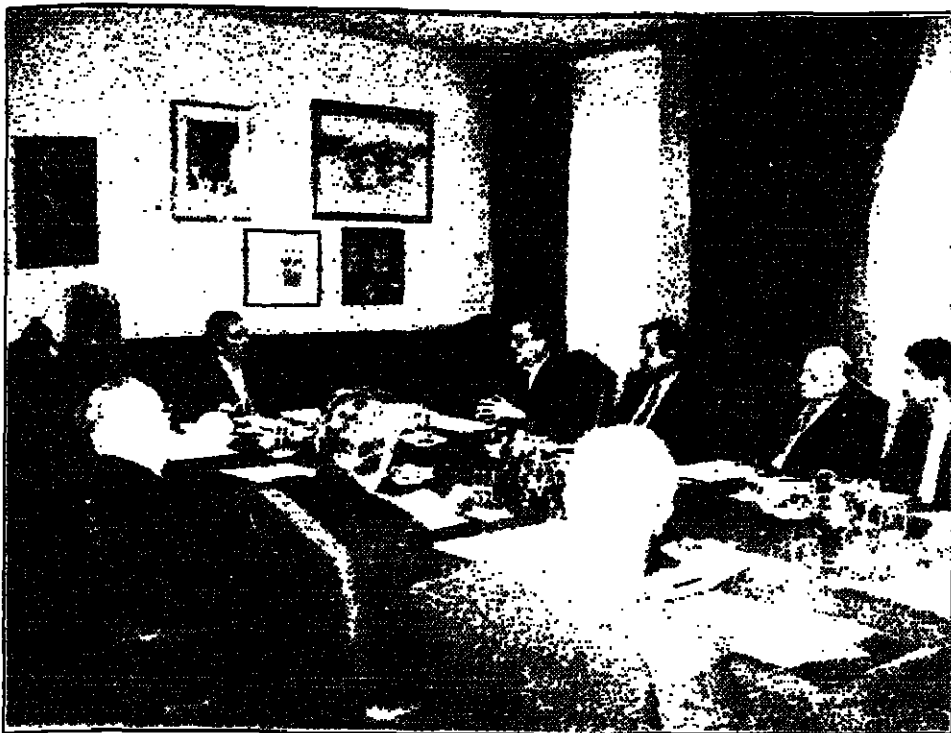
Police 775121

Highway Police 843402

Traffic Police 896390

Public Security Department 630521

Hotel Complaints 605800



Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker Sunday meets with Higher Investment Council members to discuss investment facilitation (Petra photo)

Prime minister calls for private sector participation in investment incentives

AMMAN (J.T.) — Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker Sunday said the government was looking forward to the Jordanian private sector's participation in formulating ideas and proposals that can serve as incentives for investors in the Kingdom.

In the first meeting of the Higher Investments Council (HIC), which convened under his chairmanship, the prime minister called on the council to put all efforts in facilitating investments in the peace-building era.

He said the council should speed up the drawing up of regulations for investments to be incorporated in the new investment promotion law.

The prime minister said investments should be

encouraged first in the remote and less fortunate regions of the country.

Suggestions floated during the meeting included creating a system whereby the Kingdom will be divided into three categories organising tax exemptions for the various economic sectors in accordance with development zones.

The prime minister reviewed with council members the general aspects of the new draft on investments promotion law. The members gave their consent to the formation of a board to supervise the work of the investment promotion institution to be chaired by Minister of Trade and Industry Ali Abul Ragheb and which would include the ministers of

finance, tourism, and the institution's director general Taleb Rifai, as well as Haidar Murad, chairman of the Federation of Jordanian Chambers of Commerce, Khalidoun Abu Hassan, president of the Amman Chamber of Industry and Trade, and Raja'i Muasher, Board chairman of the Business Bank.

Mr. Abul Ragheb told the Jordan Times that discussions were positive.

The HIC will play a key role in facilitating investments and in the operations of the investment promotion institution, the minister said.

He said the council is also adopting a national strategy for facilitating investments which will direct investments towards specific

Hashemite University to introduce new specialisations to meet job market needs

By Francesca Ciriaci
Special to the Jordan Times

ZARQA — The new state-owned Hashemite University in Zarqa, which opened its doors to students last September is going to help alleviate pressure on the overcrowded University of Jordan, and introduce new majors and academic specialisations to meet the needs of the current job market, according to Mohammed Hamdan, president of the Hashemite University.

The new university, whose first preliminary stage of construction was completed last August, was formally inaugurated by His Majesty King Hussein Dec. 3 and started its first academic year with 560 students and three faculties: a college of sciences, with courses in computer sciences, maths, physics, biology, environment and earth sciences, and chemistry; a college of economics and administration sciences, with classes in business administration, finance, economics and accountancy; a college of educational sciences, with teacher training courses in maths, Arabic, English and science.

According to Dr. Hamdan, who is also former

minister of higher education, new colleges of health sciences, engineering, and agriculture will be opened in the future, when the second and last stage of construction will be completed.

Dr. Hamdan underlined the importance of the geographic location of the new university, and pointed out that Zarqa governorate, with over 600,000 inhabitants, represents the second largest population centre in the Kingdom, with all the social and environmental problems consequential to an uncontrolled population growth.

According to Dr. Hamdan, the new university will help identify the problems of the Zarqa local community through field studies and surveys, finding suitable solutions and proposing new strategies of fund-raising to enforce solutions.

Dr. Hamdan also stressed that before Sept. 1995, when the Hashemite University opened, the University of Jordan was the only public institution for higher education in central Jordan.

The current infrastructure of the University of Jordan, in terms of classes, labs, libraries and student services, was designed to provide quality education for not more than 15,000

students, while this year's enrolment number is 24,000.

Mohammed Maqousi, vice-president for academic affairs at the University of Jordan, said.

According to statistics published by the Ministry of Higher Education last June, around 76,000 students sat for their Tawjihi exams in 1995, and out of more than 25,000 applicants, the Kingdom's state-owned universities could only absorb 8,219 students.

Rather than opening new universities the problem could be solved by "reshaping higher education through the promotion of one-year vocational and technical training to create semi-skilled labour," according to Dr. Maqousi.

Ahmad Hasban, secretary general at the Ministry of Higher Education, said "the establishment of the Hashemite University will hopefully relieve pressure on the University of Jordan," and added that at the University of Jordan this year, the minimum Tawjihi grade required for enrolment had to be raised to 84%.

Though the core programmes will be the same as those of the University of Jordan, the Hashemite University is designed to cover

areas not available at other universities and to introduce interdisciplinary studies in the curricula. Dr. Hamdan said new disciplines, such as environmental health, biotechnology, tourism, hotel management and hospital management, will be introduced in the attempt to promote programmes which fulfil the needs of the actual job market.

The interdisciplinary approach, which characterises modern university systems and encourages exchange between different disciplines, will be supported by the utilisation of highly updated computer and multi-media technology in teaching.

"Under the umbrella of an ongoing project supported by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), we also finalised a twinning agreement with Illinois University to exchange faculty members and visiting scholars," Dr. Hamdan said.

The Hashemite University, whose preliminary stage of construction cost JD 20 million, currently comprises two buildings with 13 classrooms, lecture halls, a library and laboratories, set up on an area of 62,000

square metres. When the works are completed, the new university will stretch over a surface of 80,000 square metres and will accommodate 12,000 students.

The Hashemite University is the fifth public university in the Kingdom. The University of Jordan was established in 1962, followed by Yarmouk University in 1976, Mu'ta University in 1981, and the more recent Jordan University for Science and Technology established in 1986. Al al Beit University, instead, is an international Islamic university.

Public universities are financed through annual government allocations in the state's budget, university taxes and donations.

According to Dr. Hamdan, fees, which are uniform for Jordanian public universities, and vary from one discipline to another, range from JD 350, for faculties of social sciences and humanities, up to JD 900, for scientific faculties such as pharmacy or medical sciences. They cover 25% of the university's running costs.

Transport company to operate to and from self-rule areas

By Ghaila Alul
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A transport shareholding company consisting of 19 founding private sector partners is expected to start carrying passengers to and from Israel in three months, a source at one of the founding companies said Sunday.

Marwan Bitar, a shareholder at Petra Navigation said that 724 companies had applied to the Ministry of Interior to establish a transport company to carry people to the areas of the Palestine National Authority, and an additional 88 companies had applied to carry passengers to Israel.

But, he said, the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Transport have decided to integrate all the applicants as shareholders, and 19 private sector companies as owners to form one company carrying passengers to and from Israel.

As for passengers going to the Palestinian self rule areas, Mr. Bitar said the company will carry them to the crossing point at King Hussein Bridge, where they will take buses owned by a newly established Palestinian company.

"In the preliminary stage, we will carry passengers going to the self-rule areas to the terminal near the

Palestinian self-rule areas," he said.

The company will be established with a JD 10 million capital, and the 19 founding private sector companies will have 25 per cent equity in the capital.

Mr. Bitar told the Jordan Times that the establishing committee, which consists of five founding members, will meet on Tuesday to discuss procedures for the registration of the company. The committee will also choose the company which will conduct the feasibility study.

Indications are that the project will be feasible even before the feasibility study is conducted, he said.

He added that upon completion of the study and the establishment of the company, the committee will start offering shares to the public.

It is not expected that the company will commence work, however, before Jordan and Israel sign the transport agreement which is to be concluded between the two countries under their Oct. 26 1994 peace treaty.

The transport agreement has been finalised, but no specific date for signing it has yet been set.

No injuries as fire breaks out in Ramtha university dorms

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — More than 140 students were evacuated from a women's dormitory in Ramtha when a fire broke out in the laundry room located in the basement of the building, Civil Defence Department (CDD) officials said.

A CDD official told the Jordan Times Sunday that the fire, which started at 5:17 p.m. in the B1 Dormitory of the Jordan University of Science and Technology (JUST), was caused by an electrical failure in one of the washing machines, setting off a fire which spread to the rest of the area.

"We were able to control the blaze in less than 10 minutes and prevented it from spreading to the four-

storey building," the official said.

He added that 143 students were evacuated from the B1 Dormitory until the rescue operations ended. There were no injuries reported, said the official.

The official said evacuation was prompt because the CDD had conducted frequent fire drills in the buildings.

Meanwhile, three people including two children were killed Sunday in three separate accidents, police and CDD reports said.

In south Marka, a 60-year-old man died when a lit kerosene heater fell over on him, CDD reports said.

A CDD official said that preliminary investigations indicated that the victim, Hamdan Mustafa Nasrallah, who was alone during the incident "probably was

attempting to switch off the heater when it fell."

According to the official, the fire destroyed the house.

Also Sunday, a four-year-old child was killed in Zarqa after being run over by a bus, according to police reports.

Hamzeh A was crossing the street when he was struck by a bus driven by Maher Aref, 23, the report said. The child was killed instantly, it added.

In Irbid, an eight-year-old child drowned after falling in a water well in her yard, police reports said.

A police official told the Jordan Times Sunday that Lamis Issa was playing alone near the water well when she fell.

He said that the child was discovered by her parents hours later.

Doctor performs 'first' ankle arthroscopic operation in Kingdom

By Ica Wahbeh
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — In what he claims to be the first operation of its kind in the Kingdom, Dr. Bashar Hamarneh, an orthopaedic surgeon, performed, at the beginning of December, an arthroscopy of the ankle joint.

A delicate operation that involves only two small incisions instead of a whole cut through layers covering the bones, the arthroscopy is done with the help of an arthroscope (a tube with a system of mirrors inside, connected to a TV set) and, according to the joint, a set of other tools, among which a punch (that punches and cuts away), scissors, a rotating knife, an alligator grasper.

The patient Dr. Hamarneh operated on was a 25-year-old man who had had a fracture in the leg and had been treated conservatively, with plaster of Paris, but who still had problems when the cast was removed.

X-ray and CT scanning showed loose bodies, usually made up of bone and cartilage.

To make sure where the bodies were, as there were



Dr. Bashar Hamarneh

three possibilities—in the joint, outside it or in the capsule (the membrane covering the joint)—computer tomography was performed.

The operation then lasted around one hour and was practically done on television. After such an operation, which is performed under general anaesthesia, the patient needs physiotherapy and in about 10 days the stitches can be removed, Dr. Hamarneh explained.

Arthroscopy, said Dr. Hamarneh, was pioneered in Jordan by Dr. Hannah

Qawar over 10 years ago.

It started on the knee, which is a bigger joint and therefore more prone to having problems. One year ago, arthroscopy started being performed on the shoulder, another big joint.

According to Dr. Hamarneh though, this kind of operation has not been performed yet on other joints like elbow, hand, hip, ankle and disk.

He attributes this partly to the fact that these, being smaller joints, are less apt to have problems and partly to lack of practice and exposure to this sort of operations, which perhaps makes doctors reluctant to start performing them.

One advantage of arthroscopy, said Dr. Hamarneh, is that, as the incisions are smaller, the pain is less, the movement of the joint is better than after open surgery and rehabilitation is faster, which enables the patient to resume work or normal life faster.

Another advantage is that, as the doctor can see everything inside the joint, the operation is easier and neater and more problems can be treated than in the case of open surgery.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Mayor receives Qatari invitation

AMMAN (Petra) — Amman Mayor Mamdouh Abbadi Sunday received an invitation from the Qatari Minister of Municipal and Agricultural Affairs to visit Doha for talks on means of enhancing bilateral cooperation, and exchange of expertise and experiences. The invitation was delivered to Deputy Amman Mayor Falah Omoush during a meeting with the under-secretary of the Qatari Ministry of Municipal and Agricultural Affairs, Ali Ben Said Al Kawai.

Damen-Masri to attend Cairo meeting

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Social Development Salwa Damen-Masri Sunday left for Cairo to take part in the 28th session of the Council of Arab Ministers of Social Affairs' Executive Bureau, which will start here today. The ministers will discuss over two days such issues as the technical secretariat's report on women and families' affairs, and settlement of Arab countries' financial obligations to the Arab Fund for Social Development. The bureau will also endorse the fund's 1996 estimated budget and technical assistance for social projects in the Arab World.

Jordan hopes to secure 3.3 m tonnes of oil from Iraq

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan is currently holding negotiations with Iraq to secure the country's needs of crude oil and oil products for next year, according to Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources Samih Darwazah Sunday.

He told the Jordan News Agency, Petra, that an official Jordanian delegation will leave for Baghdad in the first half of December to negotiate Jordan's oil needs which are expected to be around 3.3 million tonnes of crude oil.

The minister also announced that Jordan will be buying 120,000 tonnes of liquefied gas, 300,000 tonnes of diesel oil and nearly 800,000 tonnes of fuel oil to increase the amounts of oil products

which are produced by the Jordan Petroleum Refinery Company.

The oil, supplied to Jordan under an exemption to UN sanctions against Iraq, will be delivered by a fleet of 2,000 tanker trucks, the minister said in a statement published in Al Ra'i daily Sunday.

The amount of imported oil from Iraq in the coming year will be higher than the amounts imported in 1995 because of rising domestic consumption, according to the minister.

Iraq is Jordan's only source of oil supplying the Kingdom with 70,000 barrels of crude per day. Baghdad cannot sell its oil elsewhere under UN sanctions imposed after its August 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

According to Mr. Darwazah the Jordanian government has presented a request to Saudi Arabia to buy gas to be used in the electric power generation process and to supply Jordanian factories.

Most of the gas produced at Al Rishah gas fields in the eastern regions of the country close to the Iraqi border is being used for power generation producing 17 per cent of the country's power needs.

Mr. Darwazah travelled to Iraq in September this year to hold talks on Jordan's oil imports and announced that the Kingdom will continue to get oil supplies from Iraq.

Kuwait.

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Mr. Darwazah travelled to Iraq in September this year to hold talks on Jordan's oil imports and announced that the Kingdom will continue to get oil supplies from Iraq.

JES organises workshop on floods

AMMAN (Petra) — The Jordan Environment Society (JES) Sunday organised a one-day workshop on floods and their adverse effects on the environment and ways to avoid human and material losses.

The main speaker at the workshop was Colonel Mahmoud Abbadi from the Civil Defence Department (CDD) who called on various concerned organisations in Jordan to cooperate closely with the CDD in taking precautionary measures and plans to deal with the danger of floods and their consequences.

The CDD has established a special divi-

sion in 1990 to deal with disasters and was charged with providing guidance and advice to the public in case of floods and other natural disasters, Col. Abbadi said.

Col. Abbadi said floods which have occurred in the Kingdom in the past few decades have not been rated as disasters but that there was a need to point out potential threats.

The meeting was organised in cooperation with the Ministry of Water and Irrigation and the CDD and was attended by representatives of various public and private organisations.

WHAT'S GOING ON

FILM

* "Uranus" at the French Cultural Centre at 8.00 p.m.

LECTURES

* "Orwell's Animal Farm" by Dr. Nicholas Linfield at the British Council at 5.00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

* Works by artist Hind Nasser at Darat Al Funun (until Jan. 6).
* Bawadi's "Season Of Joy" exhibition, a collection of rugs and ceramics, at the National Ceramics Centre, Khaldi from 9.00 a.m. to 7.30 p.m. Tel. 825241, 834688.

CHRISTMAS SALE

* Gifts and crafts by Suha Lallas Kassieh (includes Christmas items, table mats, baskets, wall-hangings, candle-holders and side-lamps) at the Jordan Design and Trade Centre of the Noor Al Hussein Foundation, off Wadi Saqra Street (until Dec. 31).

(Until Dec. 12)
* Photography by poet Ibrahim Nasrallah entitled "The Autobiography of an Eye" at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh. (Until Jan. 4).
* Photography exhibition "Biblical Itineraries" at the French Cultural Centre. (Until Dec. 30).

N. Korea warns South over army alert

TOKYO (Agencies) — North Korea said Sunday South Korea's decision to put its armed forces on alert was a "provocation" and indicated it also was stepping up military "vigilance."

A commentary in the North Korean military newspaper Rodong Sinmun said South Korea's action was a bid to divert attention from a domestic crisis set off by disclosures about slush funds allegedly amassed by two former South Korean presidents.

The commentary, carried by the official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) monitored in Tokyo, said:

"Threat from the North and threat of southward invasion are stereotyped pretexts the South Korean puppets use to mislead public opinion at home and abroad each time they face a serious government crisis."

Last Thursday the South Korean Defence Ministry said it was increasing military preparedness on the border until the end of April.

"It is judged that North Korea, whose system is in danger of collapse, might miscalculate the situation and commit military provocations," a ministry statement said.

South Korea has also

become increasingly edgy over reports of a food crisis in the North causing malnutrition in some areas during a bitterly cold winter.

The two Koreas are still technically at war since the 1950-53 Korean War. In the past several months there have been two armed incursions from the North that have created full-scale security alerts in the South.

Rodong Sinmun said South Korea's action was a "downright challenge and provocation against North Korea."

It said South Korean President Kim Young-Sam and his followers were in "serious crisis" over the slush fund scandal and thought they could get rid of the issue by "shocking false propaganda" about a threat from North Korea.

"This futile attempt will only precipitate their disgraceful end. We are sharpening vigilance over the reckless military moves of the bellicose Kim Young-Sam group, who are driven into a tight corner," the commentary said.

"We warn them again to stop acting like a newborn puppy knowing no fear of a tiger."

Meanwhile famine and an acute economic crisis in North Korea are evoking unease in South Korea and Japan, where it is hoped the

Pyongyang regime will not be tempted to use military adventure to divert attention from its problems.

Japanese experts on North Korea are, however, more reassuring.

In Tokyo, the new Japanese Ambassador to the United States, Kunihiko Saito, said Friday that despite an economic crisis and a serious food shortage North Korea "remains an important military power."

"We cannot say that the threat posed by this country on neighbouring countries has diminished just because it is in a difficult economic situation," said Mr. Saito, a former vice foreign minister.

Some military experts believe that if North Korea launched a quick and massive offensive against the South, many weeks of fierce combat, during which tens of thousands of people would die, would be required before American and South Korean forces prevailed.

A South Korean military report showed last week that North Koreans had stationed 85 IL-28 bombers and MiG-17 and MiG-19 jet fighter planes at a rarely used air base located about 40 kilometres from the demilitarised zone separating the two Koreas.

But Japanese experts on

North Korea are less alarmist, pointing out that Pyongyang is using the catastrophic floods that inundated huge areas of cultivated land last summer to extract political gains and economic aid from its old capitalist enemies.

World Food Programme representative in North Korea, Trevor Page, revealed Tuesday that wide-scale signs of famine were visible across North Korea. "they are everywhere," he said.

But observers of North Korea say the famine does not translate into imminent revolution in a country almost completely isolated from the outside world.

"The probability of a provocative act by North Korea is low," said Narushige Michishita, associate researcher at the Japanese National Institute for Defence Studies.

"North Korea would rather continue to keep a civil attitude while the Pyongyang regime is engaged in talks with the United States and wishes to normalise relations with Japan," he said.

North Korea has already given signs of a new openness by asking — for the first time in its history — for international aid after the floods, the experts say. And it is permitting United

Nations missions and Western humanitarian organisations to go to parts of the country normally closed to foreigners.

Even if Kim Jong-Il has not yet officially seized the reins of power 17 months after the death of his father Kim Il-Sung, he is still the country's uncontested master with no sign of any organised opposition, the specialists say.

Aid from the former Soviet Union and its satellite states dried up after the Soviet collapse. But in a deal to freeze its nuclear programme, North Korea is receiving 500,000 tonnes of heavy oil annually from a U.S.-led consortium until North Korea's outmoded graphite-moderated reactors, which produce weapons-grade plutonium, can be replaced by light-water reactors supplied by the consortium.

Another sign of appeasement came from Japan Friday with the announcement that a senior official from the Federation Of Economic Organizations (Keidanren) had visited Pyongyang and other Korean cities from Nov. 7 to 11, the powerful business group's first talks with North Korean officials.



Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev casts his vote in the central district polling station of Almaty (AFP photo)

Kazakh polls fail to return quorum to lower house

ALMATY (R) — Voting for members of Kazakhstan's new lower house of parliament failed 43 of the 67 seats, but a second round of balloting must be held to obtain the two-thirds needed for a quorum, electoral officials said Sunday.

Election Commission Chairman Yuri Kim reported a 78 per cent turnout Saturday among the former Soviet republic's 3.9 million voters. The 50 per cent turnout needed to make the polls valid was achieved in all constituencies.

According to preliminary figures, runoff will be needed in 23 seats and counting is continuing in one district. No details of the party affiliations of victors were published.

"We don't have a quorum, therefore the first session of parliament will be held after the election of the required number of deputies," Mr. Kim said.

Election observers and opposition parties said they saw violations such as multiple voting and collection of votes from absentees. They added that they were barred from scrutinising the count in some polling centres.

Mr. Kim conceded that multiple voting was prevalent, but despite attempts to stamp out the Soviet-era practice, inertia among voters and local officials meant it had continued.

Opposition parties sharply criticised rules they said hampered their election chances. Voters were apathetic and observers said violations committed in 1994 elections later declared illegal had been repeated.

"One person, one vote was a principle the government agreed to abide by in numerous international agreements — but multiple voting was widespread," one foreign observer said.

"They had to reach 50 per cent, and without relying on this I doubt 50 per cent would have been reached," the observer added.

Election rules in this former Soviet republic prevented party slates from being put on ballots, leaving voters to pick any name they could recognise after a lifeless campaign.

The rules made elections in Kazakhstan different from next Sunday's elections to the State Duma in neighbouring Russia, where half the seats are being fought over on party lists.

Communists, who want to recreate the Soviet Union, are expected to do well in Russia. Their counterparts in Kazakhstan, who had only nine out of 28 candidates registered, were furious.

"It is very bad that the party is not shown on the bulletin. This is done intentionally to confuse people," a spokesman for the Communists, an opposition party, told Reuters Saturday.

Four new pro-government parties stood against two opposition parties. The Socialist Party boycotted the polls.

The Party of National Unity, registered this year and based on a social movement founded two years ago by President Nursultan Nazarbayev, put up the most candidates and said it was happy with the polls.

Parliament was dissolved in March after the 1994 elections were annulled. Mr. Nazarbayev has since held two referendums, one to extend his term to 2000 and a second to pass a new constitution.

Under the new basic law the two-chamber parliament cannot initiate laws and may be dissolved if it passes a vote of no confidence in the government. It cannot impeach the president.

Mr. Nazarbayev said the new house would have to cooperate with the government. "If there is no consensus, there are other ways to resolve this constitutional conflict," he told reporters.

Experts seek Ebola victim's route to Ivory Coast

GOZON, Ivory Coast (R) — Officials and experts hunting for new cases of Ebola near Ivory Coast's border with war-shattered Liberia are trying to trace the movements of a refugee infected by the deadly virus, security sources say.

The refugee, a Liberian man of 25 who arrived in this tiny village 15 kilometres from the border at the end of November, was diagnosed as having Ebola Friday after the Institut Pasteur in Paris analysed a sample of his blood.

He spent Saturday in quarantine in a white tent in the compound of a Medecins Sans Frontieres (Doctors Without Borders) health centre in the village, which is home to more than 30,000 Liberian refugees.

Ebola causes fever and kills by triggering uncontrollable bleeding. Medical sources in the administrative centre of Tabou said blood samples

of anyone with fever were being sent away for testing for Ebola.

"We are systematically taking samples from all fever victims," a source at one Tabou hospital told Reuters.

Other diseases prevalent in the area such as malaria or cholera also induce fever.

Foreign experts at the Gozon compound denied journalists access and refused all comment but Ivorian Communal Health Director Aminata Diarra said earlier the man, who travelled from Liberia, was improving and no other cases had been reported.

The virus, for which there is no known cure, killed 244 people in and around the western Zaire, city of Kikwit between January and August. Of 315 known cases, only 71 survived.

Stamps, singing mark 15th anniversary of Lennon's death

NEW YORK (R) — Fans of John Lennon marked the 15th anniversary of the former Beatle's death by visiting his memorial garden in Central Park and gazing silently at the apartment entranceway where he was murdered. Eight countries issued stamps to commemorate the anniversary. Throughout the cold, sunny day a crowd with changing faces but with a constant count of about 50 surrounded the Imagine stone memorial in the park and covered it with flowers, apples, candles, cards and other offerings. Lennon was shot and killed at the Dakota Apartment House across the street from the park by Mark David Chapman, a disgruntled fan, on Dec. 8, 1980. Lennon stamps that were issued in eight countries were unveiled. Lennon's wife, Yoko Ono, selected the paintings and digitalised photos of Lennon at different stages of his life, said a spokesman for the International Philatelic Corporation. She encouraged the use of Lennon's self-portrait, which was used on stamps from Azerbaijan and Mali. Previously no more than three countries have ever issued related commemorative stamps at the same time. The other countries were Antigua/Barbuda, Nicaragua, Guyana, Maldives, Palau and Ghana.

Vietnam targets foreign cultural influences

HANOI (R) — Vietnam, concerned over negative foreign influences, has stopped issuing licences to karaoke bars and discos in Ho Chi Minh City, a local newspaper reported. The daily Saigon Giai Phong newspaper said the decision, made earlier this week, was part of what it described as "a major campaign to crack down on illegal cultural products" ahead of the Tet Lunar New Year Festival in February. Items targeted by the campaign in the southern city included video and cassette tapes, signs outside bars and discos and other products which could influence Vietnamese culture in a negative way, the newspaper said. It did not elaborate. Government campaigns regularly target "the three social evils" — prostitution, gambling and drugs. However, in recent months there have been growing signs of a wider crackdown on cultural influences seen as reflecting Western rather than Vietnamese values.

Furious MPs call for ban on Boy George record

LONDON (AFP) — British pop singer Boy George sparked outrage here with plans to release a song about the drug "ecstasy," with MPs calling for Home Secretary Michael Howard to ban the record. The former heroin addict's record company is pressing ahead with re-releasing the 1989 song despite renewed uproar here over use of the "rave" drug after a teenager, Leah Bens, died after taking an ecstasy tablet at a party to celebrate her 18th birthday. Earlier Friday, police charged a 17-year-old with supplying Bens with the drug. "Everything starts with an E" — by the Eazy Posse on Boy George's More Protein Record label — was condemned as "sad and sick" by Tory MPs. But Boy George's spokesman defended it, claiming although the song was clearly about ecstasy, it did not condone its use. He added that Boy George had spoken publicly of the hazards of drug-taking after he had successfully combated his own addiction.

Japan reactor leaked up to 3 tonnes of sodium

TOKYO (R) — Company officials said Sunday up to three tons of sodium leaked from a cooling system at Japan's most-advanced nuclear reactor in an accident critics say has cast a cloud over the country's ambitious nuclear power programme.

The fast-breeder reactor, Monju, was shut down manually Friday after the liquid sodium leak and was unlikely to resume operation for at least three months.

The fast-breeder reactor, Monju, was shut down manually Friday after the liquid sodium leak and was unlikely to resume operation for at least three months.

Monju's operators, the government's Power Reactor And Nuclear Fuel Development Corporation (PNC), said there was never any danger of radioactivity from the leak in the reactor's cooling system.

PNC officials said engineers wearing protective clothing and oxygen masks had been in the affected area

and believed the leak, now stopped, was from piping repaired in 1992.

The accident set off demands for a review or end to Japan's nuclear programme which supplies 33 per cent of the nation's power needs and is scheduled to rise to 42 per cent by 2010.

Politicians from the western coastal prefecture of Fukui, where Monju is located, blasted the PNC delay in announcing the accident.

Fukui Governor Yukio Kurita said Saturday PNC waited nearly one hour after the shutdown before contacting him.

"Along with the delay in the advisory bulletin, subsequent reports were insufficient," the governor said in a statement. "This is an extremely regrettable loss of the prefecture's trust in the

overall safety of Monju." The non-governmental nuclear watchdog Citizens Nuclear Information Centre called for the immediate closure of Monju.

"This accident is the final alarm before a massive radiation disaster," centre head Jinzaburo Takagi said in a statement Saturday. "We demand that the government freeze its plutonium programme and immediately begin a total revision of policy."

Monju, at Tsuruga, 320 kilometres west of Tokyo, started operations in August after a decade of technical delays and a cost of 590 billion Yen (\$6.2 billion), double that of a conventional 500 megawatt light-water reactor.

It was to begin a test run Tuesday generating 14 megawatts of power and start full operation next

June producing 280 megawatts of electricity.

But Masaki Nishida, Monju's chief construction engineer, told reporters it would take at least three months to identify the exact cause of the leak and repair it.

Japan launched the project in 1985 to build the "dream" reactor, one that produced more nuclear fuel than it consumed.

An official of the environmental group Greenpeace told Reuters the sodium coolant leak — a technical fault common in fast-breeder programmes — could prove politically fatal to Monju.

"Even if there has been no radiation leak, the political embarrassment is so great that it could spell the end of the Monju programme," said Greenpeace Japan Director John Willis.

30 hurt in renewed Bangladesh strike violence

DHAKA (R) — Bangladesh police clashed with bomb-throwing activists in Dhaka Sunday as an opposition strike crippled the country for the second day, witnesses said.

They said police used batons and teargas in running battles with groups of militants in the city's Gulistan area.

Witnesses said two rickshaw drivers hit by bomb splinters were among about 30 people injured, one witness said.

Sporadic bomb blasts caused terror in Dhaka's main commercial district of Motijheel, where activists chased away the few people trying to walk to their offices.

The 72-hour strike, which began Saturday, is the latest of many opposition efforts to force the resignation of Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia.

In Dhaka and all other cities virtually no transport was operating and offices and businesses stayed shut Sunday.

Railway officials said a few trains left Sunday morning. Airport officials said domestic and international flights could also be disrupted.

At least 70 people were injured, mostly in the port city of Chittagong, on the first day of the stoppage Saturday.

One activist of the opposition Jamaat-E-Islami was stabbed to death in the town of Sylhet Friday, police said.

Militants set fire to the Election Commission office in the port city of Chittagong Saturday. Local officials said paramilitary troops reinforced security in the city of two and half million Sunday.

They said home-made bombs exploded as opposition activists and police chased one another in what looked like a hit-and-run battle. Some protesters were injured, one Chittagong reporter said.

At the centre of the dispute between the government and the main opposition Awami League and its allies is a general election which has been called for Jan. 18.

The opposition wants Mrs. Khaleda to resign first, so the vote can be held under a neutral caretaker administration. It alleges that otherwise the polls cannot be free or fair.

Rwandans fear fresh slaughter if U.N. troops leave

KIGALI (R) — As the Tutsi army soldier walked by, the Rwandan traders in Kigali's bustling market fell silent.

"People are afraid," Hutu peasant Pierre Hategikamana whispered.

"People say Tutsis don't want the world to witness massacres of Hutus."

"If the foreigners leave our country, the army will feel free to kill the Hutus."

Before the footsteps of the soldier silenced them, the traders had been discussing the possible pullout of the United Nations' 1,800 troops from Rwanda — an animated conversation that illustrated one view of ordinary Rwandans on the presence of the foreign troops.

The government wants to get rid of the U.N. troops saying they are not needed to provide security, which it says is the job of the army.

For many of Rwanda's Hutu people, however, it is the army that poses the greatest threat to their security.

Jeanne Mukabera, a young woman selling sweet bananas and juicy mangos on a nearby market stall, chimed in: "White people and U.N. soldiers provide

our security. If U.N. forces leave, our national army will be free to do anything."

But there is resentment at the U.N. troops among many of the Tutsi survivors of the 1994 genocide of up to one million of their people and allied moderate Hutus by hardline Hutu militia and soldiers.

The Tutsis, living with the trauma of seeing their wives and children hacked to pieces, of relatives having vanished, and of months of discoveries of mass graves, blame the U.N. troops for failing either to prevent or end the killings.

"What did U.N. soldiers do when our people were being killed by the thousands? They went back home, they didn't even take our children in their cars and planes," said Christine Uwera, a Tutsi woman nursing a baby outside her home in Kigali.

The Security Council and Rwanda failed in New York Friday to agree on a new mandate for the peacekeeping force and postponed a decision for four days on its size and composition.

Rwanda has demanded that all 1,800 troops be

replaced by a strictly non-military contingent of 800 engineers and technicians with a new three-month mandate to bring home 1.7 million Hutu refugees in Zaire and Tanzania.

Withdrawal of U.N. troops would ironically present the Tutsi-led army with one of its greatest challenges — how to win over the hearts and minds of many Hutus who see peacekeepers, rather than their own national army, as their defenders.

The army says its forces are enough to guarantee security.

"There is no job for peacekeepers here. The security of Rwanda is the business of our own army," said Claude Dusaidi, political adviser to Vice-President and Defence Minister Paul Kagame.

"Our government is transparent. Whoever says there will be killings if the U.N. leaves is talking nonsense."

The Tutsi-dominated government urgently needs to allay Hutu fears of reprisal killings if it is to have any chance of persuading at least a majority of the 1.7 million Hutu refugees in

camp in Zaire and Tanzania to return.

Until they come back, much of the country remains unproductive, and the threat of armed incursions from the soldiers who fled with the refugees will remain.

Diplomats tend to take the side of the fearful, ordinary Hutus in the argument for keeping the U.N. presence, saying U.N. troops are an important element for restraining the Rwanda Patriotic Army (RPA) in the countryside.

In Kigali, the streets are safe at night and it is rare to hear a gunshot. Soldiers for the most part appear courteous and well-behaved, although U.N. human rights observers say that disappearances and arbitrary arrests are continuing.

But if the U.N. troops do withdraw, the RPA, whose soldiers were admitted for the discipline that enabled it to win last year's three-month-long civil war and end the genocide, will have to overcome fear and suspicion that away from the capital, the army is a law unto itself.

women, according to various sources, demonstrated Saturday in Kigali in a rally for peace and against violence.

One of those taking part said they included the wives of President Sylvestre Ntibantunganya, Prime Minister Antoine Nduwayo, former President Pierre Buyoya and assassinated President Melchior Ndayaye.

Two die after ethnic clashes in Burundi

BUJUMBURA (AFP) — Two people were killed and another injured in a grenade attack at a hospital clinic after a week of ethnic unrest which ended in a huge rally for peace, sources here said.

The aid organisation Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF, Doctors Without Borders) said in a communiqué in Paris that the attack overnight Friday targeted a room of people hospitalised after clashes earlier in the week.

Two clinic staff were

killed, MSF added, denouncing the attack and calling for health centres to be spared the violence which has hit much of the rest of the capital.

According to local people, some of those being treated were members of armed Hutu extremist groups who had been injured in clashes with the Tutsi-dominated army.

Although no-one has claimed responsibility for the grenade attack, suspicion was centred on Tutsi

extremists also active in Bujumbura.

Police said 26 people — 25 militia members and an old woman — had died in clashes earlier in the week in the east of the capital, but diplomatic sources said the real toll could be higher.

Witnesses said hundreds of Hutu extremists were involved in fighting. Police said they had come from Zaire, where tens of thousands of Burundian Hutus fled to escape ethnic unrest. Meanwhile 1,000 to 4,000

Tension rises in Karachi after killing of MQM chief's brother

KARACHI (AFP) —

Troops and police were out on the streets of strife-torn Karachi in force Sunday to confront rising tension after the tortured bodies of an opposition leader's brother and nephew were found.

Gunfire echoed across Pakistan's largest city as the powerful Mohajir Qaumi Movement (MQM), blaming security forces for the deaths of the relatives of its exiled leader Altaf Hussain, called a three day strike to mourn 62-year-old Nasir Hussain and his son Araf Hussain 28.

Residents said police and paramilitary forces had high profile patrols on the largely deserted streets of Pakistan's largest city, gripped by widespread religious and ethnic violence that has left more than 1,700 dead this year.

The latest victims were found with their hands and feet bound in the Gadap district of eastern Karachi late Saturday. They were later identified by members of the Hussain family in a private mortuary and anger over their deaths soon spread.

MQM leaders said the party chief's elder brother and nephew were tortured and killed by security forces. The authorities denied any knowledge of the killings.

Nasir Hussain and his son went missing last Tuesday.

MQM Coordination Committee Convenor Ishaq Azhar, said both had been detained by the security forces.

The killings came 16 days after the murder of Ahsan Ali Shah, younger brother of the provincial Chief Minister Abdullah Shah. Officials blamed the Nov. 23 ambush on the MQM, which also denied involvement.

Ishaq Azhar, who is also member of the Pakistani Senate described the deaths as "political revenge" and the "worst example of the state terrorism."

"It is shocking not only for the party but for the whole Mohajir community," he said.

Karachi shops and markets were closed and public and private transport remained off the roads.

There was gunfire in much of the city where at least five people were shot dead Saturday. Armed men set ablaze several vehicles in the run-up to the strike. Tension also mounted in other cities in Sind province, including Hyderabad, Sukkur, Nawabshah and Mirpurkhas, reports said.

Security forces in armoured vehicles have been deployed at key points and around government buildings, witnesses said, as recriminations over the deaths of the Hussains mounted.

Karachi Police Chief Shoaib Suddle denied that the MQM leader's brother and nephew had been arrested by the security forces.

"We had sent a senior police official to investigate the matter, but there was nobody to give us any sort of information," he told AFP.

"But another MQM leader Shoaib Bukhari said: 'We will not sit idly until those responsible are punished. He added that the party would announce new action after the burial of the two men Tuesday.'

The MQM chief, who lived in self-imposed exile in London since January 1992, condemned the killings in a message, saying that his slain relatives "had nothing to do with politics."



German supermodel Claudia Schiffer clutches a huge bouquet of roses upon arrival at a Moscow hotel. Ms. Schiffer is in Russia to participate in a pre-election performance entitled Our Home Russia organised by Prime Minister Victor Chernomyrdin (AFP photo)

Russian election campaign is tough, dangerous for runners

MOSCOW (R) —

One week before a Russian election which the Communists are tipped to win, the campaign is tense, gruelling and dangerous for those involved, even though many voters still couldn't care less.

A survey reported in the daily Nezavisimaya Gazeta gave the Communists 22.9 per cent and another in the pro-Communist newspaper Sovetskaya Rossiya gave them 29 per cent, with their closest rivals on or below 10 per cent.

Exhausted party leaders, their eyes on a presidential election in six months time, are criss-crossing the world's biggest country in an increasingly bitter mid-winter campaign, hoping to reach the 20 per cent of voters who are undecided.

Two candidates have been killed, others have died in air and traffic accidents, and security authorities are increasingly nervous about the risk of violence in and around rebel Chechnya.

The latest victim was a party leader — Vitaly Savitsky of the Christian Democratic Union, who died in a car crash in St. Petersburg Saturday night. He headed one of the 43 party lists competing for votes.

Despite glossy sidesteps such as a visit to Moscow by German model Claudia Schiffer, the campaign bores the pants off most Russians, whose appetite for politics has been dulled over the past 10 years.

For many, the main task is to make ends meet and they hate seeing favourite pop TV programmes or soap operas being shifted to make room for campaigning.

"Everyone knows everything by now, preferences have been made and the television campaign causes

nothing but heartburn," said Mark Urmov, head of President Boris Yeltsin's analytical centre.

Addressing a conference in the Kremlin Saturday, he predicted a 65 per cent turnout. He agreed with pollsters' forecasts of a victory for President Yeltsin's Communist opponents, but said it posed no great danger for the Kremlin.

In a somewhat optimistic forecast, Mr. Urmov said: "Under no circumstances will left forces (Communists and their allies) have more than 30 per cent of the seats in the Duma." He added he meant both deputies elected through party lists and those in the first-past-the-post individual constituencies.

Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin's centre-right Our Home Is Russia, the liberal Yabloko Party, and the Women Of Russia grouping were also effectively ensured of forming sizeable groups in the Duma, Mr. Urmov said, summing up most opinion polls and research.

Many traditional backers of the conservative Agrarian Party were shifting to the Communists and the new Nationalist Congress of the Russian Communities (KRO), led by former top Kremlin official Yuri Skokov and charismatic retired General Alexander Lebed.

Gen. Lebed was also biting deep into the electorate of ultra-nationalist Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, who was unlikely to repeat his surprisingly good showing of 1993, when he won more than 22 per cent of the vote.

Mr. Urmov said that the chances of any party raising its rating radically in the last week — something Mr. Zhirinovskiy did two years ago — were "close to zero". Mr. Zhirinovskiy, clearly

sensing the danger, targeted Mr. Yeltsin this week with a stream of abuse designed to boost his party's mediocre ratings.

"Yeltsin today is like (late Soviet leader Leonid) Brezhnev at the end of 1982. He's a puppet. They bring him in and bring him out," Mr. Zhirinovskiy spat out at the end of an angry nationwide television presentation Wednesday.

On Saturday, the Central Electoral Commission warned Mr. Zhirinovskiy to tone down some of his remarks which it said could instigate inter-ethnic hostility. It also warned other groups against violating campaign guidelines.

The Dec. 17 election to the State Duma lower house is the first peaceful and legal transition of power in post-Soviet Russia. Mr. Yeltsin dissolved a conservative parliament in 1993, crushing its resistance with tanks.

The current Duma was elected in the aftermath of that shock. The future Duma will sit four years and, most important, will preside over the presidential election on June 16, 1996.

The presidency has much more power than the legislature under the 1993 constitution. Mr. Yeltsin, 64 and recovering from his second heart attack, has yet to decide whether to stand again and the field is wide open and tempting.

"The presidential campaign will set the tone for the Duma's work," Mr. Urmov said.

Rivalry between Gen. Lebed and Communist leader Gennady Zyuganov, both of whom are widely expected to run for the presidency, might prevent them from forming a united front against Mr. Yeltsin in the Duma.

India: Al-Faran still holds hostages

SRINAGAR, India (R) —

Indian authorities said Sunday they believed Al-Faran was still holding four Westerners hostage in Kashmir, casting doubt on a military statement that the shadowy group could have abandoned them or handed them on to others.

"Over hundred Al-Faran militants are still guarding four Westerners in the forests of Kukumag in south Kashmir," a senior police official told Reuters.

"According to our sources the number of Al-Faran militants guarding the hostages is increasing," added the official, who asked not to be named.

An Indian defence spokesman said Saturday authorities believed Al-Faran had handed the hostages over to local guerrillas or abandoned them in the Himalayan Mountains. He said they drew the conclusion from the interro-

gation of three guerrillas he said belonged to Al-Faran who were captured in a clash with Indian security forces near Anantnag last Monday.

"Interrogation of the three apprehended mercenaries ... revealed that the Al-Faran has presumably abandoned the four foreign hostages somewhere in the high ranges or maybe banded them over to some local militant group," Defence Ministry spokesman Hariharan said in a statement.

American Donald Hutchings and Britons Keith Mangan and Paul Wells were kidnapped in south Kashmir on July 4 while on a trekking expedition.

A fourth captive, John Childs of the United States, escaped to safety four days later.

Al-Faran seized two more tourists, German Dirk Haxert and Norwegian Hans

Christian Ostro, on the day Childs escaped. Ostro was found decapitated in a remote Kashmiri forest on Aug. 13.

Defence spokesman Hariharan agreed Sunday the information from the captured guerrillas could have been wrong, and the hostages might still be in Al-Faran's hands.

"They are hard core militants and can change their statement any time, so we can not bank on what these three militants reveal during their interrogation and even we cannot rule out that the hostages are still with Al-Faran," he told Reuters.

Al-Faran has demanded the release of 15 jailed guerrillas including three Pakistan nationals from the Harkat Ul Ansar group.

India has refused to bow to the guerrillas' demands and ruled out a rescue operation for fear of endangering the hostages' lives.

Colombo says Jaffna fall augurs end of Tamil revolt

COLOMBO (R) — Sri Lanka says the fall of the Tamil guerrilla stronghold at Jaffna signals the end of the rebellion and it sent in more troops to pursue the separatists.

"Our victory made the myth of the (Tamil rebels) burst," Sri Lankan Deputy Defence Minister Anuruddha Ratwatte told the independent Sunday Island newspaper.

"Everybody in Sri Lanka as well as many in the world had come to believe in the so-called invincibility of the LTTE," he said of the Liberation Tigers Of Tamil Eelam.

The army's capture of Jaffna in its biggest offensive in 12 years of war marked "the beginning of the end" of the Tamil Tigers, Mr. Ratwatte said.

Sri Lanka's national news agency said the army was sending more troops, including commandos and air mobile troops fresh from their victory in Jaffna, to the east.

Warplanes struck a rebel base in the jungle at Kanjikulichiaru, in eastern Amparai district, as troops on the ground hunted for guerrillas, defence officials said.

Rebel radio traffic intercepted by the army indicated the Tigers suffered heavy casualties in the air strikes, they added.

There was no immediate way of verifying the air strike report independently.

Police commandos and troops also surrounded Tiger bases in Amparai and Batticaloa where government officials say the rebels are trying to open a second front to keep their campaign going.

Mr. Ratwatte has said the army plans to attack the Tigers in the east where military intelligence sources say rebels have deployed large, mobile groups of fighters.

The army has been thinly stretched there after pulling

out most of its troops for the offensive to capture Jaffna.

Last Tuesday, hours after the army raised the national flag over Jaffna, rebels launched a suicide attack on an eastern police commando base, killing 29 police and losing 65 fighters.

Mr. Ratwatte said that if the rebels' war for an independent homeland for minority Tamils in the north and east was to end and peace to take hold, the government's political package offering extensive autonomy to Tamils had to be implemented.

The government says it wants to weaken the LTTE, who broke a ceasefire in April, to bring them back into talks to end the war in which more than 50,000 people have died since 1983.

Mr. Ratwatte said last week he estimates rebel strength had fallen to about 5,000 from 12,000 after the capture of Jaffna.

President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga has said the army can eliminate the Tigers but that it may not need to do so.

The army plans to launch a new offensive to secure a land route to Jaffna shortly, she said last week.

Mr. Ratwatte said security forces had destroyed the rebels' command centre, communications network, a great deal of its resources and a large number of its fighters.

The offensive to capture Jaffna town was launched to lay the ground to implement the peace plan, he said.

"Controlling and dismantling the LTTE are necessary to implement any package," he said. "Military action is aimed at creating a situation where the political solution can be implemented."

Meanwhile moderate Sri Lankan Tamil parties say they will not shift from Colombo to Jaffna in the immediate future despite the fall of the northern rebel stronghold to the govern-

ment in the military offensive last week.

Several once-militant Tamil parties have based themselves in Colombo since the LTTE launched a separatist war in the north and east in 1983.

Critics have accused the groups of failing to represent constituents' interests after years of good life in Colombo.

The parties said they had no choice but to leave Jaffna, which had been run as a mini-dictatorship where no difference of opinion was tolerated as the LTTE crushed dissent and killed rival Tamil leaders at will.

V. Ananda Sangaree, a former member of parliament for the moderate Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) in northern Kilinochchi, said Saturday his party was not planning a return to the office it abandoned in Jaffna in 1984.

"Not even in the near future," he said. "What's happening in Jaffna is 99.9 per cent of the people have left the cleared areas. We don't know when they will be allowed back."

The armed forces campaign to take Jaffna town has led to the flight of an estimated 200,000 refugees the government is trying to woo back to their homes.

The LTTE is expected to try to stop them.

K. Premachandran, secretary general of the Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF), said the refugees must return in a "conducive atmosphere" and that the government's devolution package for minority Tamils must be implemented before his party would return to Jaffna.

"The government should discuss with the Tamil people the political package and the unit of devolution," he said.

"If (the package) is fulfilled, we will have no hesitation in going back to Jaffna. Now there is no

point."

The EPRLF was the last party to hold the balance of power in Jaffna with the LTTE, finally being forced out in 1986.

The leader of the party's military wing at the time was Douglas Devananda, whose Eelam People's Democratic Party (EPDP), with nine seats in the 225-seat parliament, continues to fight the LTTE alongside government forces. Its headquarters is in Colombo.

"We have no idea when we can go back to Jaffna," he told Reuters from London where he said he was lobbying for support. "We want to get the people back to their houses first."

Mr. Devananda, the target of an LTTE assassination attempt in October, said it was possible to keep contact with northern Tamils. "People come to Colombo, government employees, ordinary people. We talk to them," he said.

The EPDP has the largest Tamil representation in parliament, followed by TULF with five seats and the People's Liberation Organisation Of Tamil Eelam (PLOTE) with three.

There are other groups such as the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation (TELO), virtually wiped out by the LTTE in 1986, and the Eelam Revolutionary Organisation Of Students (EROS), founded in 1975 and the first outside group to be trained by the Palestine Liberation Organisation.

All except TULF were once active in fighting for "Eelam, the homeland the LTTE seeks to create in the north and east."

All the parties back the government in its fight against the LTTE and support President Chandrika Kumaratunga's efforts to find a political solution to the war.

Australian conservatives recruit aboriginal to run for elections

SYDNEY (AFP) — The opposition Liberal Party announced Sunday that it has selected an aboriginal to fight the upcoming Australian election in a seat held by a renegade labour MP expelled from his party amid allegations of racism.

The contest for the Western Australian seat of Kalgoorlie, a huge constituency covering 2.2 million square kilometres, could also be one of the most crucial for Prime Minister Paul Keating's Labour government.

In a general election now widely tipped for March, Labour cannot afford to lose any seats — far less that of Kalgoorlie, its safest seat in Western Australia and one of the safest in the country.

But few party officials are willing to bet how Kalgoorlie will vote following Mr. Keating's decision last week to oust maverick backbencher Graeme Campbell, a strident opponent of Mr. Keating and of the government's policies on immigration and multiculturalism.

Mr. Campbell turned the unsophisticated outback constituency into a Labour stronghold with his strongly expressed views on issues such as immigration and race — despite the fact that more than a third of Kalgoorlie's 74,000 voters are aboriginal.

He frequently challenged his Labour colleagues by opposing Labour policy on immigration and on aboriginal reconciliation.

Roh accused of firing S. Korean Air Force chief over fighter plane deal

SEOUL (AFP) —

Jailed ex-President Roh Tae-Woo fired a South Korean Air Force chief in 1990 because he opposed a controversial military deal to buy F-16 jet fighters from U.S. firm General Dynamics, prosecutors said Sunday.

In an overnight inquiry, former air force Chief of Staff Chung Yong-Hu accused Mr. Roh of forcing him to retire for insisting on the choice of a different manufacturer's aircraft — McDonnell Douglas F-18s — for a new South Korean fighter project, prosecutors said.

"I was held by army security officers and forced to retire," the prosecution quoted Gen. Chung as saying.

The former air force head was released early Sunday by prosecutors who have interrogated former military leaders to locate the sources of Mr. Roh's slush fund.

Mr. Roh was indicted last week on charges of raising a \$650-million slush fund while in office from 1983 to 1993. But he has been silent

over accusations that he also kept secret bank accounts overseas with part of his bribes paid by arms dealers.

South Korea signed a \$5-billion contract with General Dynamics to buy 120 F-16 fighters in early 1991, about six months after Gen. Chung retired.

Mr. Roh is accused of taking bribes in return for the change, which was made despite opposition from then U.S. Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney, the Seoul daily Munhwa Ilbo said.

Mr. Cheney opposed the change in a letter to his Korean counterpart, Lee Jong-Koo, in January 1991, warning it might trigger serious suspicions in U.S. Congress, the newspaper said.

But two months later, Mr. Roh's administration signed the contract, it added.

In a marathon inquiry Friday, former Defense Minister Lee Jong-Koo acknowledged that the change was ordered by Mr. Roh. Mr. Lee's bank

records have been run-

sacked. Results of a 1993 audit released last week showed that Mr. Roh's aides handed over classified information on the fighter project to an agent working for General Dynamics, which has been absorbed by U.S. aircraft giant Lockheed Corp.

The probe into corruption in arms procurement followed three weeks of interrogations into bribes paid by businessmen to Mr. Roh.

Most of South Korea's big 30 conglomerate heads have been accused of bribing Mr. Roh. But they were treated as petty offenders, with only seven indicted and allowed to remain free until they stand trial on Dec. 18.

Some of the businessmen were questioned again last week over another slush fund allegedly amassed by Mr. Roh's predecessor, Chun Doo-Hwan, who has been jailed on mutiny charges. But prosecutors have promised not to indict the businessmen.

Troops to be sent to contain feud between rival Filipino Muslim insurgent groups

ZAMBOANGA, Philip-

pines (AFP) — Government troops are to be dispatched to contain a battle between rival Muslim insurgent groups as three more fighters were killed in continuing clashes, the military said in this southern city Sunday.

Three members of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) were killed when their group exchanged mortar rounds with the breakaway Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) Saturday, following a week of sporadic fighting near the boundary of Palsyan and Datu Piang

towns in Maguindanao

province. A military report said 300 troops from the 6th Infantry Division would be sent to the area to prevent the fighting from spreading.

Major Vivencio Bataga, operations officer of the division said "our troops will not interfere in their trouble but they are to help contain it."

Maj. Bataga said 12 Simba armoured personnel carriers have also been sent to the area and that air-planes and helicopters have overflown the site for reconnaissance. Four Muslim fighters

were killed Friday and at least nine others have been wounded in the fighting which has caused hundreds to flee their homes. The fighting is believed to be due to personal and territorial conflicts.

The MILF split from the MNLF in 1977 after that movement's Chairman Nur Misuari reversed a separatist stand in the southern island of Mindanao in favour of autonomy in 13 provinces and nine cities for the Muslim minority in this largely Roman Catholic nation.

Jordan Times

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Egypt at the polls

THE PARLIAMENTARY elections which were held in Egypt in the last two weeks were supposed to produce a general assembly that would share the governance of the country with the executive authority in accordance with the constitution and democratic norms. But what the elections led to instead were violence and recriminations unprecedented in Egypt's parliamentary polls and wide-scale attacks against the government's claim to democracy. The elections were seen by many as a charade, a prelude to further instability in Egypt and a sad reminder that authoritarianism refuses to let go in many a Third World country.

The ruling National Democratic Party took 416 out of the 444 seats in the People's Assembly. But that victory for the government came at the cost of accusations of fraud by the opposition, which rejected the polls, and extreme violence that took 40 lives and sent about 700 people to hospital.

In the words of one Egyptian columnist, "the results (of the polls) signal the fall of democracy and the beginning of an era of one party rule Neither Hitler nor Mussolini succeeded in gaining such a majority."

Such was one reaction to the polls at home. The international one is even more cynical, with the world media labelling the elections a facade and mocking the claim to democracy that the Egyptian government continuously makes.

The handling of the elections bodes ill for Egypt and its effort to curb opposition violence that has plagued the country for months.

Against such backdrop, the bewildering question is why the government held the elections in the first place. The Egyptian and like-minded governments should make up their minds as to what kind of regime they want to have. Their actions indicate strong intolerance of opposing views. If such regimes are still uncomfortable with the requirements of democracy, they should not make any claims to the opposite. Actions speak much louder than words. Over a 90 per cent victory for the government bespeaks many things, but certainly does not indicate totally free and fair elections.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

REPORTS THAT the Israelis have changed their minds about installing early warning systems on the Golan as a pre-condition for Israeli forces pull-out from the occupied Syrian heights are encouraging, said Mahmoud Rimawi, a writer in Al Ra'i daily. The reports, coming on the eve of Shimon Peres's visit to the United States where he will discuss prospects for peace with Syria during his meeting with the U.S. administration, indicate that the Israelis and the Syrians have moved closer to a peace treaty which everyone hopes will mark the start of a comprehensive peace in the region, said the writer. Needless to say that the key to peace lies with the Israeli withdrawal from Syria, Lebanon and the Palestinian lands occupied since 1967, said the writer, who stressed that a total peace can be achieved through total withdrawal. The Israelis should also give back to the Palestinians the Arab city of Jerusalem and recognise the Arab rights in the city if they want a meaningful peace and stability in the Palestinian lands, continued the writer. If Israel wants to become a full and natural partner in the Middle East, said the writer, it has to give in to legitimate Arab demands and return the usurped territories. He expressed hope that the Israeli premier's talks with the U.S. administration will pave the way for the aspired peace.

A WRITER in Al Dustour raised the question of Jordanian women marrying non-Jordanian Arab men and their children, demanding that these children be recognised as Jordanian citizens allowed to live and study and work in the Kingdom. Ahmad Shaker said that Jordanian women's dignity and rights should be respected, especially those who married in Jordan and lived all their life with their non-Jordanian husbands in the country, said the writer. Citing a number of cases where children of Jordanian mothers and non-Jordanian Arab fathers have been barred from entering schools in Jordan, the writer said that such practice is causing a great harm to the children, who cannot be sent abroad and separated from their mothers who live and work in Jordan.

Human Rights File

Abusing modern science

By Dr. Waleed M. Sa'di

IS IT not shocking that India, the biggest democracy in the world, still practises and tolerates selective abortion on a wide scale and that this de facto policy has effectively led to female infanticide in the country? According to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), there are already some 50 million girls 'missing' from the Indian population before the very eyes of the government.

In actual terms, what is happening in India is occurring in many other developing countries, where the preference to the male in conjunction with the mounting constraints of contemporary life is taking a heavy toll on females. This infanticide is taking place before our eyes thanks to modern science, which has enabled parents to determine the sex of their children before birth and terminate those who are females in a manner reminiscent of the dark ages before the advent of Islam in the Arab World. Even in our own country, many parents are suspected of exploiting the modern medicine with the aid and comfort of their physicians to end the life of their would-be daughters for the same reason that many Indian parents are doing the same. This alarming state of affairs calls, in my view, for urgent legislation on the national as well as the international fronts to criminalise these practices and hopefully stem the tide of female infanticide before it is too late.

It can be argued by cynics that we already have ample legislation on the national level against illegal abortions and that these laws are adequate to deal with the problem if

only people take them seriously. On the international level, it will be pointed out, there are already several conventions, notably the one on the right of the child, to prohibit this practice if there is only a political will to translate these effective laws into deeds.

I myself would argue otherwise. Whenever there is a specific crisis looming in the horizon, it is infinitely more powerful to legislate on it per se. Imagine if the international community has a separate and distinct treaty banning selective abortions as such and penalising the practice in the most effective and forceful way as a crime against humanity. No doubt such a concerted effort would bring to fruition the attempts to frustrate the ill-conceived cultural preferences for sons instead of daughters. Only by making the policy and practice a crime against humanity would the world rid itself of the evil practice of female infanticide in the shortest possible time. Why shouldn't we make it a crime against humanity when some nations still have a culture that not only favours one sex over the other but destroys and kills female fetus outright? I should think that Jordan can spearhead this campaign at the United Nations with a view to articulating and adopting a convention against selective abortion as a matter of the highest priority.

The international community should also target modern science and make sure that it cannot be exploited to advance the goals of inhuman cultures. Humanising science and technology has eluded mankind for much too long at a

time when advancement in them are progressing at a pace that is beyond the imagination of even scientists. Genetic engineers threaten to make human beings robots before we know it unless immediate action is also taken to control and guide genetic manipulation. There is so much that can still be adopted to check the direction of modern technology and science. It is one thing to put science in the service of man and quite another to render human beings the servants of science. India and other countries have shown in the most vivid way how science was put to the wrong use. Should the world wait till we have an international population mostly of men before we all take timely remedial action?

Islam has introduced an early effective struggle against female infanticide and this struggle has become one of the main hallmarks of the religion ever since. Against this backdrop, Jordan would be well-placed to initiate a contemporary campaign against this dreadful phenomenon. Jordan's missions in New York and Geneva could be instructed to spearhead this programme of action by first calling for a conference on the subject whose mandate could include the articulation and adoption of a set of principles on the crisis. Any such effort can certainly draw on the basic tenets of the Convention on the Right of the Child and then make additional elaborations to meet the urgent needs of the problem. Whatever needs to be done in this vein, I hope it will be done fast.

Despair on the streets

Pierre Haski argues France's currency ambitions have exposed a chasm between the establishment and the 'excluded'



development — but it has been replaced only by a void in ideas.

The current strike movement is a clear reflection of this growing gap: No major mainstream political figure can claim to represent the strikers' aspirations and demands. Worse, many figures on the left agree discreetly with Prime Minister Alain Juppé's plan to revamp the deficit-ridden social-security system, but do not have the courage to say so. Indeed, many of Juppé's suggestions were developed in his time by socialist prime minister Michel Rocard, who failed to carry them through.

This leaves the door open to Jean-Marie Le Pen's extreme-right National Front to represent and capitalise on the popular protest movement. A recent poll showed that 70 per cent of Le Pen's voters supported the strike, a surprise in view of the active role of the communist-led CGT union in the movement, but a reflection of the National Front's inroads in the formerly left-leaning working-class suburbs of major cities. An early general election, as some rightwing politicians have suggested as a way out of the current crisis, would certainly benefit the ex-

treme right.

Trade unions have shown similar divisions, with the secretary-general of the country's second-largest union, Nicole Notat of the CFT, refusing to join others in condemning the plan out-right. France has one of Europe's lowest levels of membership in trade unions and political parties. This lack of representation is a major factor in the current crisis: no one really talks for the excluded, the millions of workers who feel insecure in the midst of the country's transformation. This explains the sense of despair, the nothing-to-lose atti-

tude.

This gap was first exposed by the 1992 referendum campaign on the Maastricht treaty, which was narrowly won by the Yes camp, including all major mainstream political figures. The French love affair with Europe was over, victim of the deep recession of the late 1980s. The referendum was both a revolt against a technocratic Euro-dream (or what looked like one), and against the French élite itself. France appeared as a two-speed country, one modernised and outward-looking, the other inward-looking and terrified by the

loss of borders, physical or psychological.

Are the current strikes the No camp's revenge? Not consciously, as Europe's future is not at the centre of France's political and social debate, as it is in Britain. Only postmen and electricity workers refer, in their demands, to Brussels decisions to liberalise their sectors. But implicitly, it's France's drive towards the single currency and the tough German-inspired conditions imposed by the Maastricht treaty that are at stake.

Mr. Chirac's about-turn on his election promises were undoubtedly caused by the need to reassure markets about the pursuit of the franc fort and the country's ability to reduce its deficit in time for the single currency, officially on January 1, 1999. The toughness of his prime minister's plan and the announcement of a two-year austerity period stem from this schedule. For France is terrified of being left out of Europe's core.

Why is France so obsessed about this plan? It's a question France's élite is not asking. It sees in a closer European Union the only way for France to compensate for its loss of status in the post-colonial world. This could only be done in alliance with Germany, as Britain was looking the other way.

The meeting this Thursday in Baden Baden between President Chirac and Chancellor Kohl will bring a new confirmation of this key element of French strategy, whether it's Mitterrand or Chirac in the Elysée Palace. The question is whether French leaders have the strength to carry this programme through, or whether French people will bury in the same breath Juppé's plan and political ambitions, but also dreams of monetary union.

The writer is foreign editor of Liberation. The article is reprinted from the Guardian.

Step by step together towards world without nuclear weapons

By Gareth Evans

CANBERRA — The case for complete elimination of nuclear weapons is powerful now than it has ever been.

With the end of the cold war, the superpower standoff has given way to a security environment in which people around the world have dared to hope for an end, once and for all, to the threat of nuclear annihilation. But there is an enormous distance to go.

No longer is the biggest nuclear problem the threat that declared nuclear powers will launch surprise attacks against each other and develop ever growing stockpiles of new-generation weapons, with the attendant risks of accident or misuse. The real problem is the spread of weapons technology and material to countries that do not have them, or do not acknowledge having them.

We will not get anywhere in resolving that problem until the world as a whole believes that the declared nuclear powers are genuinely serious about eliminating their own weapons stocks. Nobody will play until they see that the field is level. Since 1970, the five declared nuclear weapon states have been not only committed to complete nuclear disarmament. The United States, Bri-

tain, France, Russia and China all signed up to this objective by endorsing Article 6 of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT). But there has been no real momentum towards achieving that objective — no practical, coherent, step-by-step plan for complete nuclear disarmament.

It is true that with the Strategic Arms Reduction Talks, the so-called START process, substantial dismantling of arsenals is under way. In May, the international community agreed to extend the nonproliferation treaty indefinitely, although many countries made clear their bitter regret at having done so when France thereafter resumed nuclear testing, while China continued to test.

Morover, there is now real confidence that 1996 will see the conclusion of a genuinely comprehensive test ban treaty. But what then? The world will still face the threat of a nuclear arsenal of more than 40,000 weapons. Even if START II is fully implemented by 2003, which at the moment seems depressingly unlikely, there will be some 12,000 warheads in existence.

How, in these circumstances, can we prevent the proliferation of existing weapons technology and material to countries and groups that are not part of the declared nuclear

club?

Without concrete moves towards the total destruction of existing weapons, threshold states will not keep their part of any new nuclear bargain, and it will not be possible to put in place the kind of verification measures that will stop rogue states and groups from joining the nuclear weapons action.

We will face the prospect of a fresh round of nuclear competition, with multiple nuclear players threatening to use their weapons, either at the state or substate level, in a way that will make nonsense of current strategies of stable deterrence.

It is with all these thoughts, and fears, in mind that Paul Keating, Australia's prime minister, announced recently that he was establishing the Canberra Commission on the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons.

The commission will bring together an outstanding group of 15 eminent statesmen, scientists, disarmament experts and military strategists from around the world to try to prepare a practical, step-by-step blueprint for achieving a world free of nuclear weapons — a blueprint which at the same time would maintain stability and security during the transition and after the goal is accomplished.

McNamara, a former U.S. secretary of defence; Joseph Rotblat, who received the 1995 Nobel Peace Prize and is the founder of the Pugwash Conferences; Field Marshal Lord Carver, former chief of the British defence staff; the Oxford-based Australian strategic analyst Robert O'Neill; Maj-Britt Theorin, a member of the European Parliament and former president of the International Peace Bureau; Rolf Ekeus, executive chairman of the U.N. Special Commission that has worked to eliminate Iraq's weapons of mass destruction; Roald Sagdeev, science adviser to former President Mikhail Gorbachev; and General Lee Butler, until recently head of the U.S. Strategic Air Command.

Other members — Celso Amorim from Brazil, Jayantha Dhanapala from Sri Lanka, Nabil Elaraby from Egypt, Ryukichi Imai from Japan and Ronald Mc-Coy from Malaysia — have distinguished records of achievement in arms control and international diplomacy.

The convenor of the group will be Richard Butler, Australia's permanent U.N. representative and former disarmament ambassador.

These are not woolly-headed idealists but figures who have lived through the cold war and have had enormous experience of disarmament issues. Not all of them are absolutely con-

vinced that it is desirable to have a world that is completely free of nuclear weapons. Quite a few of them are sceptical about whether that goal can be achieved.

But all of them will come to Canberra for the first meeting of the commission in January — and will work to produce a report for the United Nations by August — with a completely open mind, and with a clear commitment to make the world a safer and saner place.

In mapping a path to disarmament, the commission has been asked to focus closely on such practical issues as new verification and control mechanisms, and new international legal obligations. It will be particularly concerned with how to maintain stable deterrence during the phasedown to zero weapons, and how to prevent nuclear theft and terrorism.

The commission will be looking, above all, at how durable security arrangements can be achieved in a world without nuclear deterrents.

Why Australia to initiate this exercise? While a deal of work has been done in think tanks and by nongovernmental organisations on the desirability and achievability of a nuclear weapons-free world, there has not to date been a government-sponsored project of a kind capable of seriously capturing the attention of other govern-

ments. We thought there should be. Australia has some solid disarmament credentials, particularly with its role in bringing the Chemical Weapons Convention to conclusion — an exercise which convinced me that if we could build an intrusive and credible verification regime for the chemical industry, it had to be possible for nuclear technology.

And nonthreatening middle powers like Australia can perhaps sometimes be a little more adventurous in these policy matters than more exalted friends.

Finding credible answers on how to rid the world of nuclear weapons will not be easy. The commission's mandate is ambitious, far-reaching and complex. But in the climate of opinion that now exists worldwide, it is not unrealistic. The people are in many ways ahead of their governments.

The first and biggest challenge is to convince governments around the world that it is no longer necessary to passively accept the existence of nuclear weapons as an inevitable fact of life. And in that, at least, we think we can succeed.

The writer is Australia's foreign minister. The article is reprinted from the International Herald Tribune.

By Matt Crenson

Mummy's the word

Curious researcher recreates embalming process used to preserve the Pharaohs in ancient Egypt

FOR MORE than 2,000 years the ancient Egyptian art of mummification lay dormant, practiced by none and known to scholars only through the bodies of the pharaohs and a few ancient texts.

Then Bob Brier went to Baltimore.

Working last year in a specially prepared room at the University of Maryland Medical School, Brier attempted to reproduce an ancient Egyptian mummification down to the last detail. He used bronze and stone replicas of ancient embalmers' tools, anointed the body with spices purchased in the Cairo spice bazaar and dried it out with the same stuff that the Egyptians used to dehydrate their pharaohs.

By performing the procedure exactly as the Egyptians did it, Brier hoped to learn the kinds of things that aren't in books.

There are certain things that you can only learn by doing it yourself," said Brier, who is chairman of the philosophy department at the C.W. Post College of Long Island University in Brookville, N.Y.

So one day in May 1994, Brier found himself bending over the body of a man who had donated his remains to science. At the

professor's side were Ron Wade, the director of the Maryland state anatomy board, and two morticians who work at the University of Maryland Medical School.

According to the few written sources that Egyptologists have, the first step of mummification is straightforward. An account written by the Greek tourist Herodotus in 450 B.C. says the ancient embalmers simply pulled the brain out through the nose with a metal hook.

"Yeah?" Brier said contentiously. "You go try it."

Ancient techniques

Presumably, the techniques the researchers improvised to extract the brain and to solve other problems were fairly close to the methods ancient Egyptian embalmers used. That's what makes his experimental approach so valuable, Brier said.

Other Egyptologists question the scientific value of reproducing ancient Egyptian mummification, however.

"I thought that it was tasteless, and I thought that

it was also macabre," said Betsy Bryan, an Egyptologist at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore. "I don't feel that there is any real scientific contribution that one can identify in mummifying a body today, and the main reason for that is that we know an enormous amount about Egyptian mummification techniques."

Odors

Most of what's known about the mummification process comes from studying mummies themselves. Many of the pharaohs, including King Tut, Ramses II and Tutankhamun IV, have been either unwrapped, X-rayed or both. In addition, dozens of less-illustrious personages have had their remains analysed by scientists.

But the modern understanding of mummification is based not on studying mummies themselves.

Egyptologists have clues from the few ancient texts that do describe the process, and they've done experiments with chickens, rats and other animals.

Brier doesn't dispute that plenty is known about mummification, and that there are ethical questions about doing one yourself. But he points out that the body was treated at least as respectfully as most that are donated to medical science. A medical cadaver usually gets chopped into pieces, with the parts going either to medical students, who dissect them, or to surgeons who use them to try out new techniques.

And Brier wanted to learn about mummification by doing — to discover, for example, that an obsidian blade works better than a bronze one for making an abdominal incision. He wanted to know what a mummy-in-progress smells like.

"Throughout the whole

process we never encountered any unpleasant odors," Brier reported recently during a lecture at Southern Methodist University. The local chapter of the American Research Centre in Egypt, an organization, brought Brier to Dallas so he could describe how he performed the first known human mummification by ancient Egyptian methods in more than 2,000 years.

Packed in natron

The process begins with the removal of the organs from the body. Because the brain, liver, kidneys and other internal organs contain a lot of water and are deep in the body, there's hard to dry out in place. The Egyptians mummified the organs individually.

Then they put the organs in jars that were embossed either with the mummy or in a separate chest. So Brier did the same.

The first organ he removed, the brain, presented the greatest — and goriest — challenge. Working as the Egyptians did, Brier and his colleagues struggled to hook a piece of the brain and pull it out through the cadaver's nose. But every time, the hook just sliced through the brain.

Finally, "we put the long hook in the brain and used it like a whisk," Brier said. Then they turned the body so the fluid could drain out. That seemed to do the job.

Once the organs were gone, Brier preserved the body by covering it with a powdered mineral known as natron. He also packed 22 sachets of the powder into the body's abdominal cavity.

"Natron is the key to the whole process," Brier said.

Natron is a naturally occurring mixture, that is basically baking soda and table salt. It sucks moisture out of a human body just as

salt sucks it out of a fish. The ancient Egyptians collected natron in two places — a dry riverbed about 60 miles west of Cairo known as the Wadi Natrun and at El Kab, a city in southern Egypt.

Brier went to Wadi Natrun for his natron. He collected about 600 pounds of it and had a "National Geographic" film crew carry it to the United States with their photographic equipment.

Frankincense and myrrh

The body — kept in conditions similar to the hot, dry climate of Egypt's Valley of the Kings — spent 35 days in the natron, having been anointed with frankincense and myrrh purchased in the Cairo spice bazaar. Brier thinks the Egyptians used the spices to help cover unpleasant odors.

After the natron became rock hard, Brier knocked it off the mummy with an iron bar. When the natron fell away, the researchers were amazed at what a good job they'd done. The body had turned black, and its weight, originally 169 pounds, had dropped to 87 pounds.

"I was shocked at how much it looked like an Egyptian mummy," Brier said.

The researchers wrapped the body in pure linen cloth, then left it to dry a few months more. Later, it was moved to a storage area with normal room-temperature conditions.

As of Oct. 20, 17 months after the mummification began, the body weighed about 45 pounds. The procedure was a striking demonstration that people are mostly water, Brier said. With the mummification done, he and Wade agreed that they'd never try to mummify a body again.

Meanwhile, he has been deluged with requests for tissue samples and proposals for continued study on the mummy. For example, Svante Paabo, a geneticist at the University of Munich in Germany, wants to study the mummy's DNA.

Another researchers is studying a nerve from the mummy's ankle. The nerve, which can be damaged by heavy alcohol consumption, could be used to determine whether some of the ancient Egyptians were alcoholics.

"The mummy is now a research tool," Brier said. "We hope it's not going to be buried or cremated in the near future."

Dallas Morning News

King presents state awards

(Continued from page 1)

country, along with stability and national cohesion, allows to be an example which other Arab countries could do."

"The leadership's political tolerance has created a crossing point between the opposition and the regime without bloodshed and violence," Mr. Habashneh said.

The State Awards were launched in 1977 but were altered for 11 years due to technical and financial reasons. They aim at encouraging intellectual and artistic creativity as well as appreciating distinguished work in these fields.

The awards, which include merit certificate and a cash prize of JD 5,000 to JD 10,000, went this year to 2 distinguished Jordanians whose work was appreciated

and recommended by an anonymous eight-member committee. The awards were presented upon a Cabinet decision based on the committee's recommendations.

The King also presented the gold and silver medals to 15 writers and artists, including Princess Wijdan Ali and former ministers. Four Jordanians were honoured posthumously.

Among those receiving the awards were Izzeddin Mansur (poetry), Ibrahim Abu Rub and Khalid Kuris (abstract art), Yousef Damrah and Ziad Barakat (short story) and Mohammad Khreisat, Mohammad Tarawneh, Bakr Majali, Mohammad Suweiri, Mahmoud Zulum and Kasem Dru' (social sciences), Al Zeer Salem was given the awards for best play. The play was directed by Mohammad Saif Al Dumour.

Shbeilat remanded for 14 days

(Continued from page 1)

"We will call on the government to accept the other opinion and freedom of expression," Mr. Huneidi said.

The professional associations, the JEA in particular, have been at loggerheads with the government mainly over peace with Israel. Several associations have threatened their members with dismissal if they normalised relations with Israel.

In a speech delivered last month before army and intelligence officers, the King called on the "silent majority" to come out and express support for peace. He criticised the performance of professional associations, specially the engineering and the medical associations which had threatened their members against participating in the Middle East and North Africa economic summit that was held here last

October. In his speech, the King questioned if that was democracy or dictatorship and called on the associations to leave "politics for politicians."

Mr. Shbeilat, a former deputy, was convicted and sentenced in 1992 to 20 years in jail on charges that he belonged to an illegal Islamic group called Shabab Al Nafeer (the Vanguard of Islamic Youth) which aimed at toppling the regime. He was also convicted of acquisition of illegal weapons.

Mr. Shbeilat was freed shortly thereafter after the King issued a general amnesty. Upon release from jail, the independent Islamist announced that he was quitting politics because of what he said was the silence of political groups over "violations of democracy." He came back to the scene when he won the JEA presidency two years later.

Sharif Zeid

(Continued from page 1)

amendments) are not justified, since (such amendments) have not yet been drafted, let alone finalised.

How can the press launch a campaign against amendments that are still being conceived, he asked. And then, how can the "responsible" journalists stand against slight legislative changes that are intended to deter "irresponsible" behaviour by other journalists, he added.

The prime minister did not disclose what the amendments were or what specific articles in the law they related to. But the minister of information, Khaled Karaki, who attended the meeting, explained that they did not entail new jail sentences for violators of the law.

There will probably be a couple of slight amendments to the law, Dr. Karaki said, without elaborating. What the government can assure journalists of, he went on to say, is that the changes will ultimately be worked out with the Jordan Press Association and to its satisfaction.

In the 45-minute debate that ensued, the prime minister listened to different views by the editors on how the "yellow press" might be tackled, short of amending the press law, which was passed by the 11th Parliament in 1993. But while he did not say whether the government would abandon plans to change the law if the journalists themselves would contribute to solving the issue of tabloid "sensationalism," he left the door open for such an effort to be made. It is up to the Jordan Press Association to organise an effort in this regard, he would only say. Our goal is clear in that something has to be done (in order to ensure the practice of responsible journalism in the country), and the government leaves it up to others to do their share, he added.

The prime minister did not rule out the possibility that an independent council might eventually be set up to monitor and deal with press violations in the country. Such a council was called for in the original draft of the 1993 law only to be dropped later just before it was presented to Parliament for approval. But the idea proved too controversial among the editors themselves to leave a meaningful impact on yesterday's meeting.

Dr. Karaki, on the other hand, broached the idea of an altogether new press and publications law that talks solely about press freedoms, while violations would be left for the Penal Code to deal with. The problem with such a solution, though, is that journalists would end up facing penalties in cases of violation, he said.

According to reports circulating among journalists, the draft amendments to the law would include empowering the government with the right to close down publications, raising from JD 50,000 to JD 100,000 the minimum capital for newspapers, imposing stiffer penalties on violators of the law and requiring chief editors to have been members of the Jordan Press Association for at least seven years.

However, both the prime minister and the information minister dismissed these reports as either false or inaccurate, stressing that no final decision has yet been taken on the nature of the changes that will be introduced to the law.

It is a matter of public record that it was the first government of Sharif Zeid in 1989 that laid the groundwork for the new age of democracy and pluralism in this country, Dr. Karaki told the editors. It is inconceivable that a government led by such a prime minister would now attempt to limit freedom of the press, he said.

CAREER OPPORTUNITY

Fastlink is expanding in Amman and is starting operations in Aqaba and is seeking experienced, energetic, and career minded individuals who can work independently and undertake the responsibilities of participating in our rapidly growing organization. Fastlink provides an excellent working environment, a very attractive compensation package and an opportunity for advancement. All applicants must be fluent (read, write, and speak) in English and Arabic. To be considered for one of the following positions, please send your CV TYPED in ENGLISH with a recent photo to :



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Amman Positions

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2. **Network Administrator** - This person will be responsible for administration and support of a network that consists of the latest technology and architecture. The successful candidate must have experience in installing, supporting and training on a Novell network. UNIX, VMS knowledge is a plus. A minimum of 2 years experience is required. Applicants must undergo a test to ensure they are qualified.

3. **Project Manager** - This person must be a Telecommunication Engineer with at least 5 years experience in the marketing, sales and project management of telecommunication systems. This person must be acquainted with international signaling standards such as R2, R1, SS7 and should have extensive experience in X.25, modems and CCITT standards. This position requires extensive international travelling.

4. **Marketing Analyst and Planning** - This person should have 2 years experience in market planning and analysis. The individual must have experience in statistical analysis computer software.

5. **Sales Representatives** - This person should have at least 2 years experience in sales, preferably selling telecommunication equipment or P.C.'s. This person should have a car. Fastlink will provide transportation allowance.

Aqaba Positions

1. **Staff Accountant** - This person will be responsible for all accounting duties at our Aqaba shop. This will include collecting money from customers, inventory control, accounting, and any other duties required from the accounting side to run an off-site location. This person will report back to the Amman office and the position will be permanently located in Aqaba. A minimum of 3 years experience, a university degree in accounting and proficiency in Microsoft Excel are a must.

2. **Sales Representatives** - This person should have at least 2 years experience in sales, preferably selling telecommunication equipment or P.C.'s. This position is permanently located in Aqaba.

3. **Customer Service Representative** - This person should have at least 2 years working experience in the service sector dealing with customers. Computer knowledge is a must. This position is permanently located in Aqaba.



TODAY IN PETRA

PAPAZZI, the international restaurant chain is proud to announce the opening of its 2nd Jordanian restaurant in Wadi Mousa, to elegantly serve its gourmet Pizza, Pasta, Chicken and Salads to the visitors of the ancient rosy city of PETRA

Petra main touristic road - 200 meters from the ruins entrance.

GCC states set to keep spending low next year

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Arab Gulf states will likely keep spending low in 1996 as they pursue reforms to tackle a persistent budget deficit and repair economic damage caused by weak oil prices, experts said Saturday.

The six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states, which produce nearly one-fifth of the world's crude supplies, are set to approve 1996 budgets similar to 1995 when most of them cut spending.

"Most GCC states will either maintain a similar level of expenditure or reduce it in 1996 as they do not expect a major increase in oil revenues because of unchanged production," a Gulf-based economist said. "They realise low government spending means slower economic growth but there is no point in carrying out reforms when the deficit becomes worse."

GCC states depend heavily on oil export earnings and a decline in crude prices over the past decade has hurt their

economies and forced them to trim expenditure and borrow or withdraw from reserves abroad to shore up the budget shortfall.

The six members — Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) — are expected to earn around \$7 billion in extra revenue in 1995 over their 1994 income of nearly \$70 billion.

The rise is because of an increase of around \$1.5 in oil prices.

Experts said they expected revenues in 1996 to be equivalent to those in 1995 as oil prices will likely range between \$16 and \$17.

Oil production will also be equivalent as OPEC has rolled over its official ceiling of 24.52 million barrels per day for the first half of next year and producers from the GCC are showing unusual restraint in their output.

Industry analysts said the 12-nation group could agree

on another rollover in the second half despite higher world demand.

They expect the bulk of the growth in demand to be met by independent oil producers, which have sharply boosted their market share over the past years at OPEC's expense.

Economists said Saudi Arabia, the world's oil superpower, would likely set expenditure at around \$40 billion as part of its 1995-1999 development plan, which envisaged spending of nearly \$200 billion.

It will be equivalent to the 1995 expenditure, which was the lowest since 1988 when expenditure dipped to a record low of \$37.6 billion because of a steep fall in its oil revenues due to a price collapse.

Riyadh launched reforms four years ago to cushion the impact of weak oil prices and put its economy back on track.

It slashed spending from a

record \$73 billion in 1991 to \$40 billion in 1995.

This trimmed the deficit from a peak of \$33.6 billion to \$4 billion and officials have forecast the actual shortfall to be lower by the end of the year due to the oil price improvement.

The UAE, the second biggest GCC oil producer, also intends to maintain expenditure despite an expected increase in non-oil revenue due to higher return from overseas investment and a rise in taxes and services fees.

"The 1996 budget will be almost equivalent to that of 1995 while the deficit could be similar or even lower," said UAE finance and industry ministry undersecretary Naser Al Nuweiri.

The reforms in the GCC also include privatisation to ease the financial burden on governments and tap the enormous resources of the private sector.

Tietmeyer: German rates no obstacle to growth

FRANKFURT (R) — German interest rates are already low and are not obstructing economic growth, Bundesbank President Hans Tietmeyer said Sunday, only four days before the central bank council meets to discuss monetary policy.

Mr. Tietmeyer told German Radio the central bank would check "very carefully" whether another move on leading interest rates was possible after the last rate cut in August.

"But our interest rate levels are already relatively low and, from that direction there are hardly any obstacles to the (economic) growth process," Mr. Tietmeyer said according to the text of the interview for German Radio.

Mr. Tietmeyer's comments follow just days after data showed German gross domestic product (GDP) stagnated in the third quarter, provoking a round of calls for the Bundesbank to cut rates at its meeting on Thursday to revive the sluggish economy.

Mr. Tietmeyer noted that economists believe the eco-

nomny is going through a weak phase but that growth will resume in 1996. He added that growth would depend on world trade expanding further, favourable cost trends, and public spending restraint.

But Heiner Flassbeck, economic expert at the respected DIW Research Institute in Hamburg, told Der Spiegel magazine a rate cut was needed to give a shot in the arm to corporate investment and prevent a wave of layoffs.

The salaried workers' union DAG said the central bank needed to cut at least half a percentage point off key rates, warning that a slide into another recession was possible if the Bundesbank failed to act.

The Bundesbank last cut its key interest rates in August, slicing 50 basis points off the Lombard and discount rates which now stand at 5.50 and 3.50 per cent respectively.

Mr. Tietmeyer told German Radio the central bank's job was to secure price stability as the foundation for eco-

nomie growth and not to set economic policy.

"But we will check very carefully, especially in light of the money supply development and our (M3) target setting for next year, whether we can take another step. At the moment I cannot say anything about that," he said.

Mr. Tietmeyer said last week the next rates decision would be "appropriate" to the M3 money supply target for 1996.

Analysts said — in light of the normalisation of M3 growth after months of sluggishness — the comment could signal either a rate cut or no change in policy on Thursday.

But they also said the central bank, which traditionally pays only scant attention to the immediate needs of the economy, could be preparing the ground to use M3 as a front to justify a rate cut after the alarming third quarter GDP data.

The Bundesbank said at the last easing in August that M3 — its prime policy indicator — was the prime justifica-

tion for the move but the rate cuts coincided with mounting worries that the mark's appreciation was undermining German export prospects.

While divided on the chance of a rate cut on Thursday, economists say the next easing is only a matter of time, citing low inflation, the fragile economy and the firm mark.

Mr. Tietmeyer said the last round of wage agreements had not helped strengthen the German economy.

The last payround for the engineering and chemical sectors resulted in wage deals valued at between 3.6 and four per cent annually, far above annual inflation of under two per cent, and pushing Germany's steep labour costs a notch higher.

Those deals, combined with the mark's appreciation against the dollar this year of around 10 per cent, provoked howls of pain from Germany's struggling exporters and a round of threats to accelerate the relocation of production abroad.

Russia is far from full recovery

MOSCOW (R) — Russia has a long way to go before it is out of an economic crisis, despite a slowdown in inflation, halt in the fall in output and a stable rouble, Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin said.

"These successes do not mean victory in our fight against the economic crisis, in fact they probably do not even mean we have reached a decisive turning point," he said in an interview.

Monthly consumer price inflation slowed to a post-reform low of 4.5 per cent in November, and the government is forecasting an average monthly inflation rate next year of 1.9 per cent.

Despite inflation the rouble has been stable since summer.

Last week the government extended a soft peg on the rouble introduced in July, restricting its fluctuations against the dollar to between

4,550-5,150 per dollar for the first six months of 1996.

The current 4,300-4,900 range runs to the end of this year.

The government had to find a reasonable balance between supporting industries, and preventing a new inflation surge, stimulating investments and raising living standards, Mr. Chernomyrdin said.

"I'm categorically opposed to any radicalism, both right-wing and left-wing... Any attempts to turn the steering wheel sharply are fraught with a national collapse," he said.

Mr. Chernomyrdin said that although the rouble's stability was hitting export-

ers, it was also encouraging

domestic prices approached world levels, he said.

Smaller export earnings, coupled with a lack of investments and social problems, posed new threats to economic reforms.

"The time of profitable exports of cheap raw materials is passing. But Russia lives from the money received from such exports."

"Compared with these strategic problems, our successes look pretty modest... The government is losing the right to make mistakes, because any unthoughtful move can lead to catastrophic consequences," he said in the interview published two weeks before a parliamentary election.

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THE BETTER HALF

By Glasbergen

"I'm starting to get into the holiday spirit! I bought new Christmas tree ornaments featuring the girls from Baywatch!"

JUMBLE

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME by Herl Arnold and Mike Argentin

Unscramble these four Jumbles; one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

TUDAL

ROCUS

DROPEN

WEDDAN

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer here: HE ON THE

(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: BARON AIDED DARING NUMBER

Answer: The glue company considered its sales BINDING

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR MONDAY, DECEMBER 11, 1995

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Plan activities which will also please members of your loved ones today. Be careful not to disagree at home in the evening.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Get your routines working efficiently and accomplish a good deal. Be courteous and tactful towards those who are very knowledgeable.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Know how much you need financially today and work the angles needed so that you can attain it with the assistance of knowledgeable individuals.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) You have personal hopes and wishes at this time and you can apply yourself seriously so that you attain them in being successful.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Make the right arrangements which can help you to gain some most cherished wish. Show more love for the one you love.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Showing allies that you appreciate the relationship is wise for you at this time. This can be very profitable later this evening.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Handle any public or civic activities when your thinking is clear and you are full of pep. Show that you are properly grateful.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Be alert to changes which can ensure to your benefit so be willing to get out of the old. Rest up for activities later in the week.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Your intuitive faculties are working very well so follow them and use your best judgement in important matters today and be successful.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Show more patience with a highly sensitive person today and you can come to a fine understanding for later in the evening.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) You are happiest when busy occupied with activities which are prosperous and this is a day when you can accomplish a good deal.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) You are able to bring visionary ideas down to a practical level today and bring more success to yourself and your loved ones.

Birthstone of December: Turquoise — Zircon

THE Daily Crossword by James Barrick

ACROSS

- It's downhill from here
- Hoodwink
- "My country — of thee"
- Curious one
- Garage service, for short
- fide
- Security device
- Application
- Daunts
- Lama
- Roundabout ways
- Rigging supports
- Gumbo
- Police action
- Championship
- In that case
- Ziegfeld
- Sound of laughter
- Went slowly
- Sojourn
- Ripen
- van der Rohe (architect)
- Bull and
- Barleycorn
- Bullfighting figure
- Vendition
- Rulers to the east
- By implication only
- A burning
- Punch
- Something bitter
- Vacation mail
- Skid sideways
- Dismounted
- Broadcast portion
- Approving cry
- Gist
- Marsh plant

DOWN

- Win by —
- Be a hero
- Crowd
- Discriminating eater
- Shortcomings

Yesterday's puzzle solved:

L	A	M	A	C	H	A	M	P	T	B	A	R
O	V	E	N	O	I	L	E	R	A	N	I	
B	O	T	T	O	M	L	I	N	E	A	C	I
O	W	E	M	E	L	T	S	I	C	K	L	E
C	A	T	E	R	S	O	U	T	F	R	O	N
O	D	O	R	E	B	A	S	S	O	B	A	A
T	O	P	E	E	O	S	S	R	E	A	C	T
E	B	B	M	A	R	T	I	E	S	A	C	R
S	E	A	S	I	D	E	S	P	A	R	K	E
N	E	R	D	S	T	A	M	P				
S	H	A	N	S	I	S	I	N	E	M	O	A
T	E	N	S	C	E	N	T	E	R	F	O	L
I	R	A	E	T	R	I	L	L	A	R	E	A
R	O	S	S	S	A	T	E	S	R	O	O	M

38 Sailor
40 Act badly
41 Japanese people
42 Plant
43 Naval rank: abbr.
44 Cog
45 Melodramatic

46 Old name for Tokyo
47 Uhasa —
48 Small brook
49 Roasting rod
52 Knock
53 Biblical judge
54 Pool item

Peanuts

Andy Capp

Mutt'n' Jeff

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Growing investment in stock funds fuels Wall Street boom

NEW YORK (AFP) — Americans are ploughing record amounts of savings into stock funds fueling a long, solid performance this year in Wall Street, which market analysts see continuing for some time.

Each month, American households pour some \$10 billion — after deducting redemptions — into mutual funds for investment in the stock market, according to Investment Company Institute (ICI), which researches some 5,700 such funds who have the bulk of private savings.

The growing popularity of stock funds has played a key role in Wall Street's record-breaking streak. On Tuesday, the Dow Jones index

came close to the 5,200-point mark just two weeks after breaking through the landmark 5,000-point barrier.

While private savings in the United States remains relatively weak (four per cent of income), mutual funds channel a large share of this money to the stock market. It also represents two-thirds of all pension funds, providing a steady, solid base to the stock market shielded from daily fluctuations.

Private savings and pension funds combined account at present for half of the trillion dollars placed in investment funds quoted on the stock market, and the level continues to rise.

At first sight, the public's interest in the stock market

could be written off as a passing fad motivated by simple greed. But there is more to it than that, says John Collins, market analyst for ICI.

"The performance of the market and the flow of money into stock funds are not closely correlated," he said. "Last year, the market was pretty flat and inflows were at a record level."

This love-relationship with stocks follows a drop in interest rates which made long-term, fixed-rate investments less attractive.

Now that inflation is under control, stocks have resumed their traditional role for Americans, said Rosanne Cahn, an economist with C.S. First Boston.

At the end of the 1960s, she explained, "equities accounted for more than half of all household financial assets." That level dropped to 24 per cent in 1982 and it has risen to 35 per cent since then, she added.

In 10 years, Ms. Cahn said, mutual fund assets (stocks, bonds, unit trust investments on the financial markets) have quintupled to \$2.6 trillion, with one third of them in the hands of private investors.

Nancy Dunham, financial adviser and the author of several investment guides, attributes the popularity of mutual funds to their convenience for those who lack time and experience to build their own portfolios.

The flow of capital to the stock market fell off slightly

in October, but it should rise to record levels in November, according to Robyn Tice, spokesman for Fidelity Investments, the country's leading investment company.

"The Dow passing 5,000 had a lot to do with investors looking at opportunities to participate in the market," she said.

The arrival of a new class of inexperienced private investor during a booming market is unsettling to some analysts, who fear that at the slightest danger the newcomers might stampede into a selling frenzy, forcing investment companies to dig into their assets to meet the sudden withdrawal of funds.

"These new investors haven't yet been tested by a market downturn of some length of time," warned Anthony Sparc, chief investment adviser at San Francisco-based Sparc, Kaplan, Bichel and Associates.

"When that is the case, then we will see if human nature has changed and if they don't get scared," he added.

Recent experience, instead, has shown that professionals are the first to lose

their cool in troubled times. It happened during the bond crash of February 1994, and again during the Mexican crisis. Private investors braved both storms with nerves of steel.

"Households respond to changing fundamentals slowly. Institutional investors respond quickly and in a herd," said Ms. Cahn.

"The truth is the opposite of the fear — as long as interest rates stay low, huge sums of money should be gradually reallocated to equities," Ms. Cahn predicted.

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Business Daily Brief

A review of news from the Arabic press

Civil servants likely to get salary increases from January 1996

★ ACCORDING TO sources at the Lower House, the head and members of the House's Finance Committee have asked the government to effect a salary increase from the beginning of 1996 and not from May of next year. The sources said there are high hopes that the government would agree to this public demand. The head and members of the committee have hinted to the minister of finance that they would insist, during the debate on the budget, on effecting the increase in January, the sources added. They pointed out that the increase would be JD 10 and would include classified personnel, staff on contract and daily-paid workers. It was not known whether retired civil servants will be included. A number of deputies said that they will demand in their speeches during the debate on the budget that the raise be "hefty" and benefit all government employees including the retired (Al Ra'i).

Minister of supply shortens period for keeping prices fixed

★ THE MINISTER of supply decided to reduce the period of maintaining prices fixed before reconsidering them again from six months to four months. The decision came in response to demands from the association of foodstuff traders that the ministry either float prices or reduce the period required for new studies. Responding to the minister's decision, the association said the measure was not enough and demanded that the period be further shortened if prices are not to be floated. The association's request came in light of big rises in prices of imported fresh and frozen meat, milk and milk products as a result of exporting countries' lifting subsidies on these products in preparations for applying World Trade Organisation rules (Al Ra'i).

Ramtha residents break water metres to avenge questionable consumption

★ RAMTHA WATER Directorate is being financially drained having spent more than JD 300,000 over the past three years to install new water metres at houses where old metres were deliberately damaged. The number of water metres broken during last year alone totalled about 4,000, a maintenance employee said. The employee, Qasem Al Hayek, attributed the reasons behind the residents of Ramtha breaking their water metres to higher spending on water consumption. "When the Water Authority official reads the metre, families complain of more than usual consumption and take their revenge by breaking the metre or removing it completely to gain more water illegally. Broken metres at some houses are emptied of their mechanical equipment and, instead, stuffed with wood and steel.

Abu Mohammad, a Ramtha resident who declined to give his full name, said he always removes the metre to get water free. He explained that the water flows better without a metre and points out that most of the people in his quarter do the same. Other people said some go as far as using a motor to siphon water in a quicker and better method but at the expense of other residents who get angry and end up breaking their water metre in revenge. Yousef Hajjat, the Water Authority director in Ramtha, says this phenomenon has become very troublesome and has exhausted the financial resources of the directorate. "I wish every person would realise that every piastre spent on replacing a water metre is public money and consequently it is the person himself who pays for the damages" (Al Dustour).

Foreign Exchange Market Summary (December 4 - December 8, 1995)

AMMAN — The U.S. unit traded in narrow ranges during last week. It ended the week 0.2 per cent lower against sterling, while stabilising against the mark and the yen. The dollar drifted lower against sterling and the mark Monday, while appreciating marginally against the yen. Reports indicated that the U.S. unit managed to recoup some of its losses that were realised earlier that day in Tokyo. It rose on news that the French government emphasised that it will continue with the social security reform plans that it announced the previous week despite the fierce opposition. The dollar also benefited from a rally in both the stock and the bond markets.

The U.S. unit depreciated against other major currencies Tuesday. Its decline came on the back of the French franc's appreciation that materialised when French Prime Minister Alan Juppe vowed to press ahead with the reform plans that the government announced the previous week despite the opposition. The French prime minister also announced that he would like to talk with trade union officials.

The dollar rose against other major currencies Wednesday, however. Continued strong performance of both the U.S. stock and the bond markets lent support to the dollar. It also benefited from the mark's depreciation against other European currencies especially the French franc. The French franc rose on rumours, that were later denied, that the French and the German governments planned to peg their currencies together at the following day bilateral summit.

The U.S. unit continued its appreciation against the mark and sterling Thursday. Remarks from Bundesbank President Hans Tietmeyer that called for a higher dollar, lent support to the dollar. Mr. Tietmeyer stressed that the dollar does not reflect the full economic potential of the United States.

The dollar retreated against the mark and the yen at the end of the week, however, while stabilising against sterling. Reports indicated that the dollar rose to a high of 1.4550 mark due to a solid rally in the bond market, only to fall victim to profit-taking operations. Meanwhile, the U.S. Labour Department released a report which showed a rise of 166,000 in non-farm payrolls, compared to a revised rise of 66,000 in October, while the unemployment rate inched up to 5.6 per cent. Analysts indicated that the report came below expectations and as such the Fed might ease its monetary policy on its next meeting on Dec. 19.

The U.S. unit, thus, ended the week at 1.4465 marks, 101.25 yen and at \$1.5340 to the pound.

New York Closing Rates for Major Currencies Against the U.S. Dollar

Currency	Today Dec. 8 - 1995 Close	Friday Dec. 8 - 1995 Close	Percent Change
Sterling Pound*	1.5310	1.5340	(0.20) %
Deutsche Mark	1.4457	1.4465	(0.06) %
Swiss Franc	1.1775	1.1680	0.81 %
French Franc	4.9980	4.9855	0.25 %
Japanese Yen	101.19	101.25	(0.06) %

* USD Per NTG

Currency	Dec. 8 - 1995 1-Month (%)	Dec. 8 - 1995 1-Year (%)	Dec. 8 - 1995 1-Month (%)	Dec. 8 - 1995 1-Year (%)
U.S. Dollar	0.06	5.37	5.81	5.28
Sterling Pound	6.62	6.25	6.50	6.18
Deutsche Mark	4.00	3.56	4.00	3.62
Swiss Franc	2.12	1.81	2.31	1.87
French Franc	6.31	5.75	5.25	5.00
Japanese Yen	0.28	0.30	0.23	0.46

Source: Reuters. Last rates for currencies exceeding U.S. Dollars 1,000,000 or equivalent

Currency	Buy	Offer
U.S. Dollar	0.7080	0.7100
Sterling Pound	1.0846	1.0900
Deutsche Mark	0.4908	0.4933
Swiss Franc	0.8046	0.8076
French Franc	0.1420	0.1427
Japanese Yen*	0.6979	0.7014
Dutch Guilder	0.4367	0.4387
Swedish Krona		
Italian Lira*	0.0445	0.0447
Belgian Franc		

* Per 100

Race is on to occupy KIA's hot seat

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwait Sunday announced the resignation of the man in charge of its multibillion-dollar investment empire after a 30-month tenure dominated by a campaign to clean up its scandal-hit operations.

Diplomats said Ali Al Badier's 30-month tenure as Kuwait Investment Authority (KIA) managing director would be a hard act to follow because he had shown political courage and skill in probing past corruption and reforming the KIA's administration.

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET			
HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - SIDEKISANI			
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ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SUNDAY 10/12/1995			
COMPANY'S NAME	NO. OF SHARES TRADED	VALUE TRADED JD	PREV. CLOSING PRICE
ARAB BANK P.C.	360	84960	237.500
CAIRO AMMAN BANK	14900	64774	4.350
MIDDLE EAST INVESTMENT BANK	5000	5550	1.100
WIT HOUSING BANK	450	2130	4.700
JORDAN KUNAIF BANK	1350	2677	2.750
JORDAN GULF BANK	1900	2071	1.000
ARAB JORDAN INVESTMENT BANK	1000	3750	3.750
JORDAN ISLAND BANK	800	2796	3.480
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WALZ TRADING IN PARALLEL MARKET	73350	112094	1.530
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR	327199	482133	INDEX NUMBER: 118.66
GRAND TOTAL	469161	825036	INDEX NUMBER: 153.44
NO. OF TRADED SHARES IN PARALLEL MARKET	155991		
VALUE TRADED IN PARALLEL MARKET	133255		

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United miss chance as Newcastle crash

LONDON (AFP) — Second-placed Manchester United missed a golden chance to step up the pressure in the title race after failing to make the most of Premiership leaders Newcastle's second defeat of the season at injury-plagued Chelsea.

While Kevin Keegan's Newcastle were unable to sustain their sparkling early season form at Stamford Bridge, United had looked on course to close the gap at the top to two points when they held a 1-0 half-time lead over Sheffield Wednesday at Old Trafford.

Frenchman Eric Cantona scored his first goal in open play since returning from his lengthy suspension for attacking a fan to put the hosts in front.

But Mark Bright and Guy Whittingham silenced a packed Old Trafford with goals on 59 and 78 minutes to give Wednesday the lead, before United's French star volleyed home from 10 yards to make it 2-2 seven minutes from

time. United boss Alex Ferguson acknowledged the missed opportunity, saying: "We have missed three glaring chances. It doesn't matter how you are playing, if you miss chances like that you are going to regret them."

Buoyed by an apparent truce in a bitter boardroom battle that has been raging all season Chelsea made the Magpies look second best in an impressive 1-0 victory, which left the Magpies now four points clear at the top of the table.

With chairman Ken Bates and boardroom colleague Matthew Harding cheering the Blues on together from the directors' box after putting their feud behind them in midweek, Glenn Hoddle's men piled on the pressure.

Newcastle lost goalkeeper Shaka Hislop with a thigh injury that will keep him out for two weeks as they prepared to defend a Wise free-kick in the 43rd minute. And Pavel Srnicek's first

touch was to pick the ball out of his net, after Romanian World Cup full-back Dan Petrescu had chipped the clearance back past him.

Despite an improvement by the visitors in the second-half, Chelsea were full value for the three points.

"In the first half we were very poor, almost a joke. We had so many players not playing well," said Keegan.

"I was very disappointed with them and told them so at half-time. For all the domination in the second-half we never really created much in the way of chances," he added.

Champions Blackburn, 4-1 Champions League winners over Rosenborg of Norway, are still looking for their first away Premiership win of the season after being thrashed 5-0 by struggling Coventry, who now move off the bottom of the table.

Ron Atkinson's side, without a league win for three-and-a-half months, took the lead through defender David

Buss's first goal of the season on 40 minutes.

Dion Dublin, with his 10th goal of the season, David Rennie, Peter Ndlovu and John Salako completed the second-half rout.

To make matters even worse for Rovers, they lost midweek hat-trick hero Mike Newell and inspirational midfielder Lars Bohinen through injury, both having fallen badly on the icy pitch.

Juninho was the inspiration as he dominated play and scored his first goal for Middlesbrough, who ensured Manchester City's remarkable revival came to an end with a 4-1 defeat at the Riverside Stadium.

Boro's Brazilian idol pounced on 75 minutes after City's German keeper Eike Immel had failed to hold Phil Stamp's shot to complete a great comeback for the hosts.

Georgi Kinkladze, who manager Alan Ball regards as Georgia's answer to Juninho, had given City a 17th-minute lead after a jinking run, but

England striker Nick Barmby took advantage of a mix-up in the Blues defence to equalise after 33 minutes.

Barmby scored his second 10 minutes into the second half. A minute earlier Stamp had put Boro ahead after a fine solo dash through the Blues' rearguard.

Arsenal captain Tony Adams, likely to skipper England against Portugal at Wembley on Tuesday, was dismissed for a professional foul after 54 minutes of the Gunners 0-0 draw at Southampton.

Adams could have no cause for argument, however, having brought down Saints.

Striker Neil Shipperley, who had a clear run on goal.

England striker Teddy Sheringham's third-minute goal, his 14th of the season, was enough to give Tottenham a 1-0 victory over struggling QPR at White Hart Lane. Rangers have now gone nine games without Premiership victory.



Paris Saint Germain forward Patrice Loko (left) scores the third goal for his team as Bruno Carotti of Nantes can't stop the ball in their French first division soccer match (Reuters photo)

PSG gain revenge against French champions

PARIS (Agencies) — Paris Saint Germain stretched their lead to nine points in the French championship on Saturday following their biggest win of the season — a 5-0 home victory against title holders Nantes.

Just a week before the winter break, PSG gained a creditworthy win in an impressive exhibition of attacking football.

Panamanian Dely Valdes, Youri Djorkaeff and Nantes old boy Patrice Loko put PSG 3-0 up by the break.

And Brazilian Rai hit another in the first minute after the interval and Nouma added to the score on 88 minutes to further demoralise the Brittany club in front of a near-capacity 42,000 supporters at the Parc des Princes.

It was revenge for PSG who had lost 3-0 in the corresponding fixture last season which effectively decided the championship in Nantes' favour.

Earlier PSG had laid on 20 coaches to enable 3,000 fans to travel from the outskirts of Paris despite the 16th day of strikes which has brought the French capital to a standstill.

Nantes lie in second spot, but have a chance to claw back to six points behind the leaders with their trip to Strasbourg on Sunday.

Meanwhile Monaco's Brazilian Sonny Anderson and Michael Madar earned a 2-1 away victory in Burgundy against third-placed Auxerre. But, on a worse note, Monaco's Emmanuel Petit was sent off with half and hour to go.

Fourth-placed Metz, who led earlier in the season, had to be content with a goalless draw at home to lowly Cannes.

But it was PSG who took the acclaim this weekend.

Their biggest win of the season before Saturday was a 4-0 scoreline over St. Etienne on August 9. PSG quickly got off the

mark in the fifth minute when Laurent Fournier broke down the right and centred for Valdes to beat keeper Dominique Casagrande with his 12th goal of the season.

Nantes nearly equalised in the 12th minute when Japhet N'Doram put a Reynald Pedros cross over the bar.

In the 31st minute, Youri Djorkaeff added another strike.

Rai intercepted a pass back by Laurent Guyot and fed Valdes, who made an inspired backheel into the path of Djorkaeff who then lobbed stranded Casagrande.

Three minutes before half-time, Patrice Loko celebrated their third goal after a long ball by Paul Le Guen was expertly deflected into Loko's path by the head of Valdes.

The Rai converted another lobbed goal before Nouma, on for Valdes, completed Nantes misery two minutes from time.

Vikings, Chargers keep playoff bids alive

MINNEAPOLIS (AFP) — Warren Moon threw for 267 yards and two touchdowns here Saturday, leading Minnesota past Cleveland 27-11 to keep alive the Vikings' National Football League playoff hopes.

Moon completed 20 of 29 passes, including a one-yard touchdown to Charles Evans and an eight-yard touchdown to Jake Reed, before leaving in the fourth quarter with sore left ribs.

"At this point of the year, everybody is playing with a little pain," Moon said. "I don't think it will be any problem or anything that will keep me from playing next week. I just came on in the second half and it didn't feel right."

The Vikings (8-6) celebrated their fifth triumph in six games. They are battling for a wild-card playoff berth but face a major test next at reigning league champion San Francisco.

The 39-year-old Moon has thrown 18 touchdown passes in his past six games.

The outmatched Browns (4-10) lost their sixth game in a row. They have been winless since owner Art Modell announced he was moving the club from Cleveland to Baltimore next year.

The Browns lost starting quarterback Vinny Testaverde in the second quarter with a pinched nerve in his right hip.

In the day's only other game, 1995 Super Bowl loser San Diego edged visiting Arizona 28-25. Andre Coleman returned the second-half kickoff 92 yards for a touchdown to give San Diego a 21-14 lead and the Cardinals never pulled even again.

The Chargers rose to 7-7 with their consecutive triumph but must likely win road games at Indianapolis and against the New York Giants in the final two weeks of the season to earn a return trip to the playoffs.



San Diego Chargers' tight end Alfred Pappas (86), pushes off an Arizona Cardinals' defender during first half action in the Chargers' 28-25 victory in their game at San Diego's Jack Murphy Stadium (Reuters photo)

NFL dispute could affect other fields

A \$30 million court case involving American football practice players will be heard by the United States Supreme Court for a ruling that could affect the entertainment and construction industries.

A group of 1989 National Football League rookies filed the class-action anti-trust lawsuit when owners ignored union rejection of pay plan and imposed a \$1,000 weekly salary limit on practice-only reserves.

Such salaries are typically set through individual negotiation, so players sued and won a \$30.3 million judgement after a jury trial.

Owners, who argued they were exempt from anti-trust suits, had the award thrown out last March by the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in a 2-1 vote. Appeals Judge Harry Edwards said "anti-trust police must give way" to federal policy.

The ruling prevented unions from filing anti-trust suits against opponents who solely declared contract imposes to impose their work rules.

Such problems were at the heart of the labour battle that affected the past two U.S. professional baseball seasons.

LECTURE POSTPONEMENT:

The Friends of Archaeology announces the postponement of its lecture which was to take place on Monday, December 11 "Boundaries, roads and farms of ancient Gerasa" by Dr. Jacques Seigne to Wednesday, December 13, at the FoA center at 6:30 p.m.

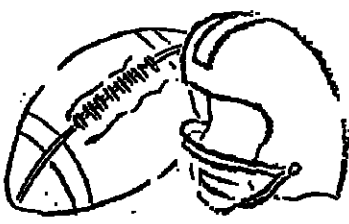
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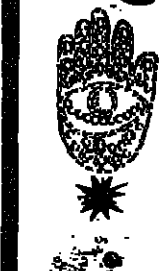


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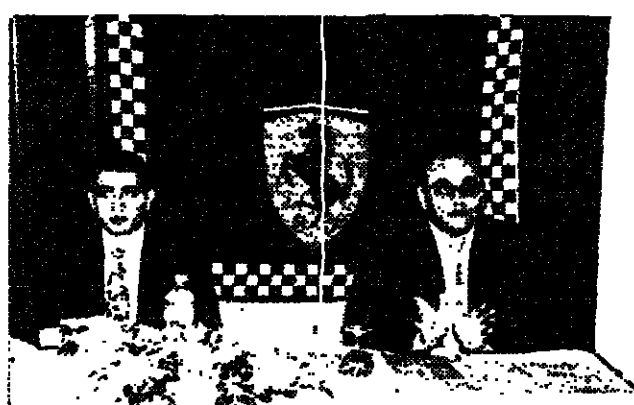
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Qweider launch Ferrari

The General Manager of Qweider Commercial Establishment, Ali Qweider, held a press conference at the Marriott Hotel Saturday to announce launching the Italian Ferrari perfumes for men and women in the Jordanian market.

Mr. Qweider said the Ferrari company introduced the Donna perfume for ladies and 456 and 512 for men. 456 and 512 are named after the Ferrari cars



produced by the company. Assistant General Manager and Marketing

Manager Ziad Qweider said Ferrari company was offering the new Ferrari perfumes at a special rate to be able to compete in the Jordanian market and said every purchase of any of the Ferrari perfumes will entitle the buyer to a free special gift.

Ferrari Donna is a fragrance for a woman in love with purity. A sensual, intensive and elegant woody note, sandal and musk, mix on the dry-down with vanilla and amber scents.

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Two intensive, refined tonalities. 456 GT the opening effect of a refined fragrance characterized by the clear blending of Mediterranean scents (lemon, bergamot, neroli) leads to deeper flowery (jasmine) and aromatic tonalities (sweet basil, sage).

512 TR this high-class, modern perfume was created with a starting blend of fresh, vivacious scents (bergamot, mandarin, estragon), which continues with a precious harmony of woody (cedar), flowery (iris) and aromatic scents (sage).

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AMMAN - JORDAN

Martin faces Ivanisevic in Grand Slam Cup final

MUNICH (AFP) — American Todd Martin caused a sensation and disappointed the home crowd as he ousted Germany's Boris Becker 5-7, 6-3, 6-4, 7-6 (7/4) to set up a final against Goran Ivanisevic in the six-million-dollar Grand Slam Cup here on Saturday.

Fourth seeded Martin, who knocked out the overwhelming favourite after the withdrawal of world number one Pete Sampras, now plays either Croatia's 10th world-ranked Goran Ivanisevic.

Ivanisevic ousted Russia's Kafelnikov 7-6 (9/7), 4-6, 6-3, 6-4 to give himself a chance of the \$1.625 million top prize on Sunday. Ivanisevic

beat down 41 aces during the match.

Despite having the crowd against him, Martin triumphed with his consistency, good returns of serve and an ability to mix his shots.

Becker, meanwhile, was unsettled and lacked sharpness in this last event of the season, and combined brilliant shots with terrible

Becker hit 17 aces but had just a 38 per cent success with his first serve compared with Martin's 23 aces on a fast surface where good serving was vital. The three-times Wimbledon champion also made 14 double faults.

However, Becker made a promising start, with Martin unable to break his serve in the first set. But at 3-4 down in the second, Becker lost his serve after netting two easy forehand volleys and Martin went on to level at one set all.

Martin won the third set against a string Becker, who



Croatia's Goran Ivanisevic points to supporters after winning the semi-final match against Yevgeny Kafelnikov at Munich's Grand Slam Cup Tennis Tournament (Reuters photo)

appeared irritated by umpiring decisions, the crowd and his own game.

Drama increased in the fourth set at 4-4, with both players on one break apiece and Becker forced to save four break points.

However it went to a tie-break and Martin, who set up two match points with a deadly lob, sealed victory after a Becker error.

Martin said: "I think I was able to serve well when I needed to more often. Every time I started to play poorly,

it didn't affect me, I was able to keep the pressure."

As for the \$812,500 he is guaranteed, the American said: "It is the most money I've ever won, but that has very little to do with why I'm here."

"I'm building a house. I'll find some other ways to get rid of it and hopefully find some charities and stuff like that. I certainly don't need it all."

Becker acknowledged: "He played top class tennis in this match. I was not consistent enough."

"I got problems in timing my serve, made a few double faults that I didn't have to do. There was no weak period in his play."

"Today, anyway, I couldn't play any better."

Malone nets 51 for Utah Jazz

SALT LAKE CITY (R) — Karl Malone scored 51 points Saturday as the Utah Jazz overcame the Golden State Warriors 123-109.

Malone matched the 51 points scored by Denver's Mahmoud Abdul Rauf two days earlier in the same building as he shot 19-of-28 from the field and 13-of-16 from the foul line.

"I don't keep track of things during the game," said Malone, who also had 14 rebounds. "My teammates were, though."

"(Jeff) Hornacek came up to me and said, 'Hey, how many you got?' He looked up and said, 'let's get 50.' But I don't try to rub it in. We just needed it at the time."

It was Malone's best scoring performance since his career high of 61 points against Milwaukee on January 27, 1990.

Malone scored 19 of the Jazz from a 74-58 deficit into an 85-85 tie.

John Stockton, who had 11 pointer surge that helped Utah put the game away.

Stockton, listed as doubtful before the game, rebounded from a sprained left ankle and made his 464th straight start, the longest current streak in the NBA.

In Atlanta, Patrick Ewing scored 14 of his 29 points in a 20-1 burst in the fourth quarter and the New York Knicks allowed just one basket in the final nine minutes of a 101-92 victory over the slumping Atlanta Hawks.

John Starks added 20 points for the Knicks, who have won four of their last five and improved to 8-3 on the road. Steve Smith scored 29 points for the Hawks, losers of five in a row.

In Seattle, Detlef Schrempf scored 28 points and Shawn Kemp added 25 as the Seattle SuperSonics defeated the Portland Trail Blazers 106-97 for their fourth

straight win.

Kemp added 13 rebounds and Gary Payton had 13 points, 12 assists, seven rebounds and three steals for Seattle, which moved into a first-place tie with the Sacramento Kings in the Pacific Division.

In Cleveland, Chris Childs scored 14 of his 17 points in the fourth quarter when the New Jersey Nets held the Cavaliers to just nine points to rally for an 85-73 win over Cleveland.

The Nets outscored Cleveland 27-9 over the final 13:30 to win for the fifth time in six games. Danny Ferry scored 18 points for the Cavs, who shot 3-of-15 in the final period.

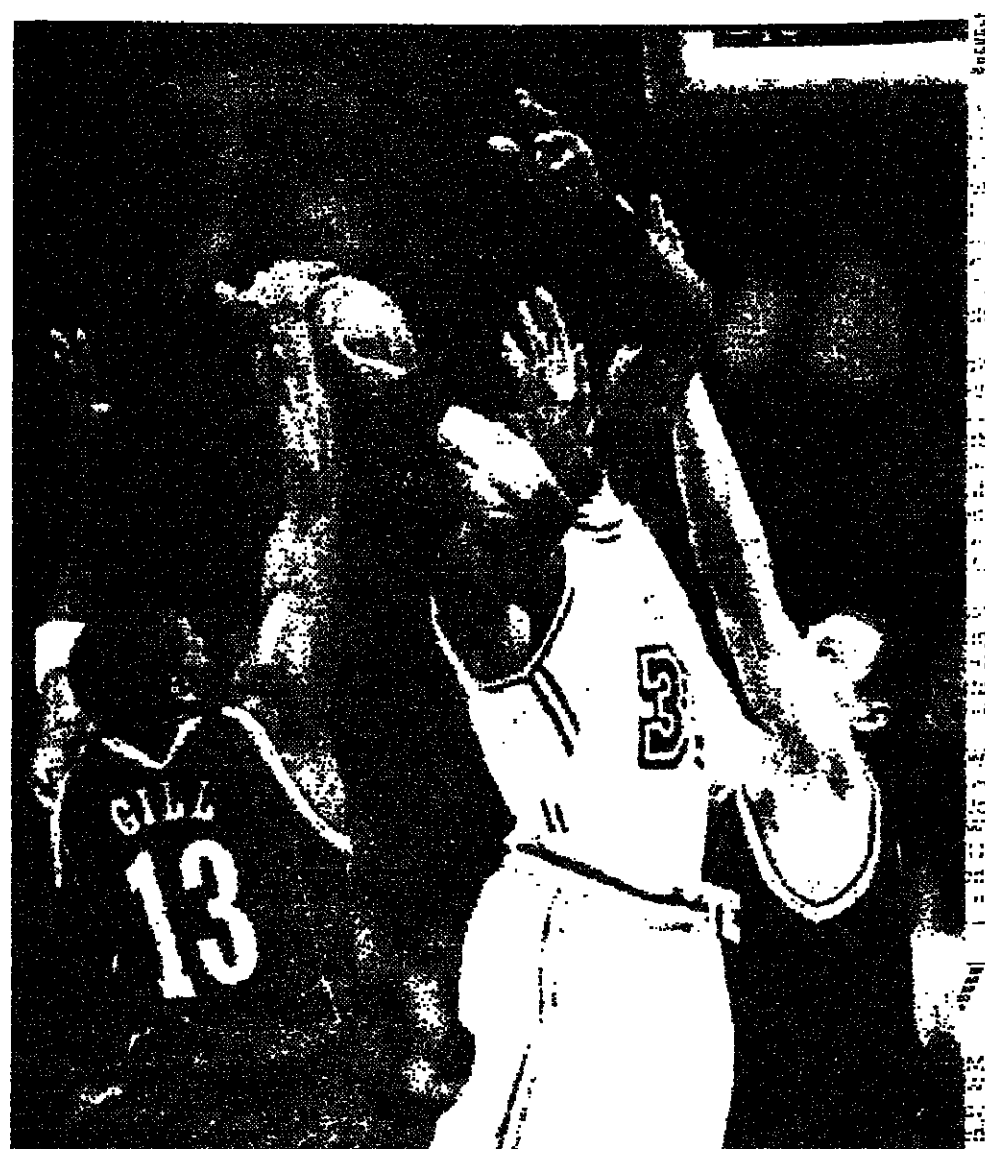
In Milwaukee, Michael Jordan scored 13 of his 45 points in the fourth quarter and Scottie Pippen scored six in a key fourth-quarter run as the Chicago Bulls defeated the Milwaukee Bucks 118-106 for their sixth straight win.

Dennis Rodman grabbed 21 rebounds for Chicago, which improved the league's best record to 16-2.

Glenn Robinson had 39 points and 12 boards for the Bucks.

After Robinson dunked to tie the game at 90-90 with 10:21 left in the fourth quarter, Jordan hit a pair of free throws to ignite a 13-4 run. Pippen, who had 28 points, scored the next six points on consecutive jumpers and a layup.

In Charlotte, Larry Johnson scored seven of his game-high 35 points during a pivot-



Charlotte Hornets guard Kendall Gill (left) shoots over Hornets centre George Zidek, who blocks a shot by Miami Heat centre Alonzo Mourning (centre), as Mourning attempts to shoot over Hornets centre George Zidek during second quarter action at the Miami Arena (Reuters photo)

al third-quarter run as the Charlotte Hornets defeated the Minnesota Timberwolves 114-108.

With the Hornets trailing 71-59 with 9:35 left in the third quarter, Johnson scored seven points during a 9-0 run

that pulled Charlotte back into the game. Johnson also led the Hornets with 11 rebounds.

Christian Laettner led the Timberwolves with 20 points. In Dallas, Robert Pack scored 25 points and Calbert

Cheaney added 22 to lead the Washington Bullets to a 103-94 victory over the reeling Dallas Mavericks.

After starting the season 4-0, the Mavericks have won just two of their last 14 games.

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Opening lead: Four of O

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West led the four of diamonds,

and East applied the Rule of Eleven to work out that declarer held three cards higher than the one led.

When South followed with the deuce under East's king, the defender decided that diamonds offered no future and shifted to a club.

That finished off declarer's chances. South could not come to nine tricks without the diamond suit, and as soon as the defenders were given the chance to win the ace of diamonds they cashed out the clubs for a two-trick set.

Given the auction, we would not have selected a diamond as our opening lead; there was too good a chance that might be declarer's suit. Our choice would have been a high spade. Having received a reprieve, declarer failed to make the most of it.

Declarer should have encouraged the defenders to continue diamonds. The way to accomplish that was to falsify with the eight of diamonds, suggesting that the lead might have been from a six-card suit, perhaps even headed by the ace-queen. East would surely then have returned a diamond.

The rule of thumb is simple enough. As declarer, play your cards exactly as a defender would — a high card to encourage continuation, a low card to suggest a shift.

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Halley Pharmacy / Jaber Center	(Monday) 11/12/1995	10:30 - 1:00 & 4:00 - 7:00
Samah Perfumery / Housing Bank Center	(Tuesday) 12/12/1995	10:30 - 1:00 & 4:00 - 7:00
Al Atar Showroom / Down Town	(Wednesday) 13/12/1995	10:30 - 1:00 & 4:00 - 7:00
Astra Showroom / Gardens St.	(Thursday) 14/12/1995	10:30 - 1:00 & 4:00 - 7:00
Snohar Pharmacy / Shmeisani	(Saturday) 16/12/1995	10:30 - 1:00 & 4:00 - 7:00
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PNA, Hamas aim for Cairo talks this week

GAZA (Agencies) — The Palestinian National Authority (PNA) and its rival the Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas are aiming for long-mooted reconciliation talks in Egypt next week, officials on both sides said on Sunday.

PNA officials said on Saturday Egypt had offered to hold the dialogue between Hamas and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) on Sunday but Hamas did not reply, saying it had not received a formal invitation.

Officials on both sides say privately that a dispute between Hamas's leadership in exile, which insists on a hard line against the PLO-Israeli peace deal, and some local leaders, whose stance has softened, had blocked the Egyptian meeting so far.

Hamas opposes the 1993 deal providing self-rule and elections in Gaza and the West Bank. Its militants have killed scores of Israelis in suicide bombings. The attacks slowed in recent months as PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat stepped up contacts to turn Hamas from violent to political opposition.

Hamas also admits it has been dealt a heavy blow by arrest campaigns ordered by Mr. Arafat after its attacks on Israelis.

PLO officials said Hamas locally now proposed sending an 11-member team to Egypt on Wednesday to hold talks with its exiled leadership prior to a meeting with Mr. Arafat next week.

But local Hamas officials

conditioned any meeting on release of one of their leaders, Abu Musameh, jailed this year by a PNA military court for two years for incitement.

Mahmoud Al Zahar, a Hamas leader in Gaza, told Reuters: "The meeting with the leadership outside will take two days, maximum two days, so if Sheikh Abu Musameh is released, the meeting with the PLO will take place next week."

An Arafat aide, who spoke on condition he not be named, said: "President Arafat wants Hamas to respect the peace agreements he signed with Israel, and this means refraining from carrying out attacks against Israelis."

"The president is studying Abu Musameh's release so he can take part in reconciliation talks in Egypt," the aide said. While Hamas is still officially opposed to Jan. 20 Palestinian elections to be held under the PLO-Israeli accord, there are signs it is hedging its bets. A political party which is a Hamas offshoot has been formed.

On Saturday, leading members of the new party, the national Islamic Salvation Party (NISIP), met Mr. Arafat and received his permission to issue a newspaper expressing the party's views. In parallel, Imad Al Falouji, editor and publisher of Al Watan, another newspaper affiliated with Hamas, announced he was closing Al Watan. He gave no reason.

Mr. Arafat on Saturday

delayed for four days until Dec. 14 candidate registration in hopes Hamas would join the process. The NISP has yet to put up a candidate.

In Damascus, the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) has called for a boycott of the Palestinian elections, the official Syrian news agency SANA said.

The leader of the group, Nayef Hawatmeh, said, "these elections are neither free nor democratic," and called for a referendum to discover the Palestinian people's view of the autonomy records struck with Israel.

Another Syrian-based group opposed to autonomy, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, announced Thursday that it would boycott the elections. Farouk Kaddoumi, the head of the PLO's Political Department, said Sunday the elections would not produce a legitimate authority because they were taking place under Israeli occupation.

"The organisation of the elections before the reconstruction of Palestinian society is a leap into the void, because the Israeli occupation is still in place and most of the Palestinian people will not take part in the vote," Mr. Kaddoumi said, quoted by the Arab daily Al Hayat on Sunday.

That's why the legitimacy of the council will be fragile and it will only be able to impose its authority through repressive and violent measures," the Tunis-based leader added.



THAI TRADITION: Thai women wearing colourful traditional costumes from different tribes are paraded during the opening ceremonies on Saturday of the 18th Southeast Asian Games at Chiang Mai stadium in Thailand (AFP photo)

Rotblat receives Nobel Peace Prize, renews call for nuclear-free world

OSLO (AFP) — British scientist Joseph Rotblat and the anti-nuclear Pugwash movement have been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize at a ceremony in the Norwegian capital Sunday.

Mr. Rotblat, 87, was visibly moved as he stepped up to receive the award in the televised ceremony in front of some 1,000 invited guests including King Harald V and Queen Sonja of Norway.

Afterwards he called in his acceptance speech for a world free of nuclear weapons and war and accused the major powers of failing to honour pledges on disarmament.

Receiving the prize on behalf of the Pugwash movement was Secretary-General Francesco Calogero. Mr. Rotblat has headed the organisation, founded in a Canadian fishing village of the same name in 1957, since 1988.

Mr. Rotblat has said he will donate his share of the annual peace prize, worth 7.2

million Swedish kronor (\$1.1 million), to Pugwash.

The movement is dedicated to making scientists more aware of the destructive powers of their inventions, and it has played a key role in several disarmament accords.

Earlier the co-laureates had an audience with the Norwegian king and queen and were due later Sunday to speak on the U.S. cable television channel CNN.

In his speech, Mr. Rotblat said that present nuclear thinking was "a recipe for proliferation" and "a policy for disaster."

"The cold war is over but cold war thinking survives," he added. "There is no evidence a world without nuclear weapons would be a dangerous world. On the contrary it would be a safer world."

He said the two main nuclear powers had begun to make reductions in their arsenals and that if that programme continued, "all nuclear warheads could be dis-

mantled in a little over 10 years from now."

"We have the technical means to create a nuclear-weapon-free world in about a decade. Alas, the present programme does not provide for this," he added.

Public declarations of commitment to an indefinite extension of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty were not matched by deeds, he said, urging nations to "abandon out of date thinking."

He also called on his fellow scientists to refrain from working on nuclear weapons projects.

"If all scientists heeded this call there would be no more nuclear warheads, no French scientists at Mururoa (the French nuclear testing site in the South Pacific), no new chemical and biological poisons."

He said the 18-year prison sentence for Israeli scientist Mordechai Vanunu, jailed in 1988 after revealing secrets of Israel's nuclear programme, had been "disproportionately

severe."

"The purpose of some government or industrial research is sometimes concealed, and misleading information is presented to the public."

"It should be the duty of scientists to expose such malfeasance ... This may bring reprisals; a price to be paid for one's convictions. The price may be very heavy," he added.

Turning to the people of the world, he asked: "Help us to establish lasting peace."

"A nuclear-free world would be safer than the present one but the danger of the ultimate catastrophe would still be there. The only way to prevent this is to abolish war altogether."

He denied the search for a world free of war was "a Utopian dream," arguing that there already exist areas of the globe — the European Union, for example — where armed conflict was "inconceivable."

Israeli dart shell attack wounds 3 U.N. soldiers

TYRE, Lebanon (Agencies) — Israeli forces wounded three U.N. soldiers in a cluster bomb attack on Sunday in a cluster bomb attack outlawed under international conventions, U.N. officials said.

At least one U.N. officer charged that the attack was deliberate, while Israel apologized to the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL).

"The Israeli forces knew we had a patrol in the region. They had contacted us an hour earlier to ask us if any peacekeepers were there and we replied affirmatively. Despite that they opened fire," said the officer.

The Israeli army said it opened fire after "identifying suspicious movements" in the Israeli-occupied "security zone" in South Lebanon and said it "deeply regrets" that the Norwegians were hit.

UNIFIL spokesman Timur Goksel said a fragmentation shell was fired by an Israeli

tank at five peacekeepers on patrol near Marjayoun, headquarters of the Israeli force in the "security zone."

"The soldiers were hit by pieces from a fragmentation bomb. They were hit by darts in several parts of the body which penetrate the flesh very deeply and are difficult to extract," he said.

One of the Norwegians was seriously hurt and UNIFIL strongly protested to the Israeli authorities about the incident, said Mr. Goksel who also informed the U.N. secretariat general.

"It is not the first time that Israel has used banned weapons in South Lebanon," Mr. Goksel said.

In its statement, the Israeli army made no mention of the type of weapon fired at the Norwegians.

"We have just received an official apology from the IDF (Israeli defence forces)," another UNIFIL official said later.

9 of 10 Greeks want Papandreou to quit

ATHENS (Agencies) — Nine out of 10 Greeks want their ailing prime minister, Andreas Papandreou, to resign, according to a public opinion poll in Sunday's Eleftherotypia newspaper.

The independent left-wing daily found that 89.4 per cent of the people it asked in the Athens area on Wednesday and Thursday thought the 76-year-old leader of the ruling PASOK socialist party should stand down as prime minister.

Mr. Papandreou, 78, was admitted to Onassis heart hospital on Nov. 20 with pneumonia. His condition soon worsened, then improved, and it was reported this weekend to be stable.

"He has been breathing without a respirator for more than 24 hours," said a medical bulletin issued at Sunday, adding that he remained on a dialysis machine while his heart condition was "stable."

Eleftherotypia's poll indicated that 64.9 per cent of Greeks thought Mr. Papandreou should resign as leader of the party he founded in 1974, while 24.5 per cent thought he should stay on.

Among those thought most capable of succeeding Mr. Papandreou as prime minister, 37.1 per cent favoured former cabinet minister Cerasimos Simittis, leader of the socialists' reformist faction.

Defence Minister Gerassimos Arsenis was backed by 22.3 per cent.

Mr. Simittis was also favoured by 33.6 per cent to lead PASOK into Greece's next legislative elections, due in late 1997, against 23.7 per cent for Mr. Arsenis.

The prime minister's extended illness has prompted much jockeying for position within PASOK ranks, as members anticipate a change at the top. Greece's conservative opposition is meanwhile demanding that Mr. Papandreou resign.

He denied the search for a world free of war was "a Utopian dream," arguing that there already exist areas of the globe — the European Union, for example — where armed conflict was "inconceivable."

COLUMN

'Palace wants to broach divorce in Diana talks'

LONDON (AFP) — Buckingham Palace wants to link talks with Diana, the Princess of Wales on her new public role, with her anticipated divorce from Prince Charles, heir to the British throne, the Sunday Times reported. In a dazzling high profile BBC interview last month, Princess Diana said it was "not my wish" to divorce. However, she admitted: "Obviously we need clarity on a situation that has been of enormous discussion."

She also made very clear her desire to become a roving ambassador.

According to the newspaper, quoting senior royal sources, Buckingham Palace wants "amicable twin-track talks in which divorce is discussed in conjunction with the princess's hopes for an ambassadorial role." It added that the palace was believed to be "initially looking for encouraging signs of a willingness by the princess to confront the divorce issue — rather than an immediate agreement — in return for looking favourably on her ambassadorial ambitions." A government minister, who asked to remain anonymous, told the newspaper: "The princess's future role would depend on any divorce settlement. If she becomes a private citizen, she can go wherever she likes and do whatever she likes. She would have no more call on government resources than another citizen. If she remains a member of the royal family, she would get government back-up. It is still likely to take two years before a divorce settlement is finalised, by which time the couple will have been separated for five years, the paper added.

U.S. company takes on British royal train

LONDON (AFP) — U.S. company Wisconsin Central Transport Corporation has taken over running a train reserved for the British royal family, as part of controversial British rail privatisation, a rail spokesman announced Sunday. "The new owners will run the locomotives which pull the royal train and supply the drivers, but the coaches will remain the property of Railtrack (one of British Rail's subsidiaries)," the British Rail spokesman said. The U.S. company told reporters it would also be responsible for some 25 per cent of postal trains, following its acquisition of the British Rail subsidiary Rail Express Systems (RES). Wisconsin Deputy Chairman Randy Henke said the cost of the acquisition would not be revealed until the New York Stock Exchange opened Monday. The British taxpayer foots the bill for the yearly maintenance cost of \$4.34 million for the royal train which comprises 15 coaches and is used about 100 times a year.

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Weather prompts emergency measures in U.S.

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Freezing temperatures and high winds throughout the northern United States Saturday prompted authorities to issue warnings and urge the homeless to seek shelter. In Chicago, officials declared an "extreme weather emergency" Saturday as the wind chill factor dropped to minus 34 degrees Celsius (minus 30 Fahrenheit), said Henry Locke, spokesman for the city's Department of Human Services. The low temperature hit minus 20 Celsius (minus 5 Fahrenheit), Mr. Locke said. "This is killer weather," he said.

Opposition gears up for fight to dissolve Egyptian assembly

CAIRO (Agencies) — Egypt's opposition parties have geared up to fight for the dissolution of the newly-elected parliament, accusing the ruling party of barring them from the assembly through massive vote fraud.

At a press conference of party leaders on Saturday, the opposition demanded parliament's dissolution and the forming of "an impartial government to hold new elections" under "international supervision."

They said they would "work for the fall of the fraudulent assembly" and "meet to study possible responses," including the unilateral withdrawal of its deputies from the assembly.

President Hosni Mubarak's ruling National Democratic Party (NDP) will hold a total of 416 out of 444 seats in parliament after a crushing defeat of the opposition, which took only 14.

The remaining 14 seats went to independent candidates after two rounds of voting completed on Wednesday.

Reeling under the blow, the opposition heads slammed the government, saying it aimed "to wipe out the opposition."

Muslim Brotherhood member Mohamed Abdul Qaddus said the election "brings us to the edge of dictatorship as in the last days of Anwar Al Sadat," when

Mr. Mubarak's predecessor lashed out at the opposition, arresting its leaders.

But divisions appeared even as the parties met, as shouting matches broke out at the press conference between Brotherhood supporters and the representative of the Marxist Tagammu.

The government weekly Akhbar Al Yom also condemned the landslide in an editorial on Saturday, saying it "signalled the fall of democracy and the beginning of an era of one-party rule."

"Neither Hitler nor Mussolini succeeded in gaining such a majority, which indicates that the assembly will become merely an NDP committee," wrote Mustapha Amin, one of the founders of the prestigious weekly.

A top Egyptian legal body has declared final the results of the elections.

Egyptian administrative courts had ruled last week that the bitterly-contested results were not final in at least 53 constituencies out of a nationwide total of 222, pending suits alleging electoral abuses.

"The commissioners of the council of state have decided that the administrative court is not specialised to deal with the appeals (against the elections) and has cancelled its rulings," the council of state said in a report seen by Reuters.

Qatar raises stakes in row with Gulf Arab partners

DOHA (AFP) — Qatar raised the stakes in its dispute with its Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) partners by threatening to boycott the group if a Saudi stays on as GCC secretary general, diplomats said Sunday.

Qatari Foreign Minister Sheikh Hamad Ben Jasssem Al Thani vowed Saturday to walk out of any GCC meetings attended by the new secretary general, Jamil Al Hujailan, and without Doha's contribution to his \$300,000 salary.

Diplomats said Doha sought to force its partners into finding a quick and honourable solution to the row that erupted Wednesday when Qatar's emir, Sheikh Hamad Ben Khalifa Al Thani, walked out of a summit in Muscat over the appointment.

Sheikh Hamad charged that the appointment violated the GCC charter since it did not win unanimous support. Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates and Oman backed the move, while Qatar stuck with its own candidate.

"Qatar believes it is being

mistreated because it is a small country. It wants to be heard even if it doesn't have the same weight as Saudi Arabia," a Western diplomat said, asking not to be named.

"Doha is raising the risk of a boycott to speed up a solution," he added.

Sheikh Hamad Ben Jasssem said he would travel to a meeting of the GCC with Egypt and Syria in Damascus on Dec. 28, but would "leave the room" if Mr. Hujailan is there.

However, he stressed that Qatar "does not intend to pull out of the GCC," founded in 1981.

Qatar will continue its financial contributions to the Riyadh-based organisation but will not pay its share of the \$300,000 granted to the new secretary general when he takes up his post, he said.

The foreign minister called for a "brotherly solution" to the conflict, or at least a "legal solution" through the GCC.

Not only was Mr. Hujailan named without unanimous support, he was appointed in a "non-brotherly way," the

foreign minister said, claiming other Gulf states rode roughshod over Qatar's objections and "undermined its dignity."

But the minister refused to talk of a crisis with Gulf superpower Saudi Arabia. It was a "misunderstanding" between the Saudi "big brother" and the Qatari "little brother," he said.

Doha "will not question the Saudi leadership" of the GCC, he added.

Asked whether Qatar would keep up its stand if its demands are not met, he replied: "The answer is in the stars."

The semi-official Al Sharq newspaper said Qatar's stand "was a question of dignity" which could not be measured in terms of geography or economics.

Some Gulf newspapers had mocked Qatar's "superpower behaviour."

An Arab diplomat said "dignity is especially important in this part of the world because of the weight of tradition." Any solution had "to include an honorable reconciliation," he added.

Qatar also no longer wanted to hear lip service on Gulf border disputes, including those between Qatar and Saudi Arabia and Qatar and Bahrain, the diplomat said.

"This question is constantly postponed from meeting to meeting, from summit to summit. Qatar feels that nobody really wants to settle these conflicts," he said.

Qatar accused Bahrain of taking advantage of its boycott last week to add a

paragraph to the final summit communiqué aimed at undercutting any move by Doha to take their dispute to the International Court of Justice in The Hague.

Doha also blasted Arab countries' stand towards Israel and complained that the West was using the Gulf states for their money.

Foreign Minister Hamad defended the decision to allow the U.S. firm Enron to sign a letter of intent to ship Qatari gas to Israel — a move which diplomats said sparked Saudi disapproval.

"We have lost every war with Israel," he said. "Let's speak frankly. If we don't sell this gas, Israel will have no problem getting it elsewhere, and it's Qatar, an Arab country, that will lose the contract."

"We (the Arabs) are used to shipping oil to Rotterdam which was then delivered to Israel for \$2 more per barrel," he said during the three-hour press conference.

"We could have sold the oil directly to Israel for two dollars more per barrel and pocketed billions of dollars which would have been used

in the battle against the Zionist enemy," he said.

He then corrected himself adding: "The former Zionist enemy."

Sheikh Hamad also complained of being used financially.

"If there's a war, our contribution is solicited. If there's peace, we are solicited," he said.

"They have even asked us to finance the closure of nuclear plants in North Korea. It's too much," he said, referring to Washington's effort to rid Pyongyang of its nuclear potential.

He complained that Rolf Ekeus, chairman of the U.N. Special Commission (UNSCOM) on disarming Iraq, only visited Gulf countries for the first time last month after he needed funds.

"Mr. Ekeus began his mission five years ago," after the Gulf war to free Kuwait from Iraqi occupation, "but we only saw him when he needed money," Sheikh Hamad said.

The GCC agreed to finance only part of UNSCOM's activities "because the rest of the world must also help out."